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SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

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China helped Pak during Op Sindoor

Top Army General says China gave real-time intel, Turkey supplied drones

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

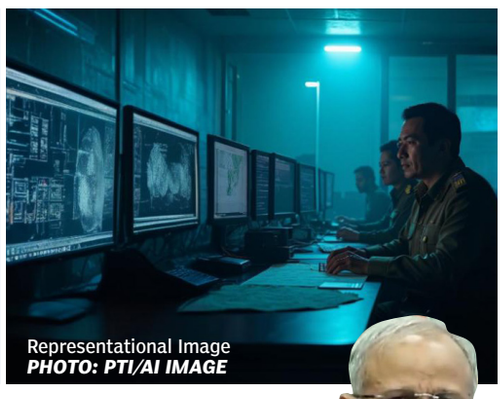
China used the four-day India-Pakistan conflict in May like a "live lab" to test various weapon sys-tems and was providing support to Islamabad, Deputy Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Rahul R Singh said on Friday.

He said while Pakistan was the "front face", with China extending all possible support to its all-weather ally, Turkey was also playing a major role by supplying military hardware to Islamabad.

In an address at a seminar on "New Age Military Technologies" organised by industry chamber FICCI, Lieutenant General Singh suggested that China used its satellites to monitor Indian military deploy-ment as the Pakistan military was getting live inputs on it during the DGMO (Director General of Mili-tary Operations)-level phone talks.

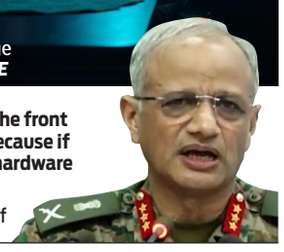
The Deputy Chief of Army Staff highlighted China's ancient military strategy of "36 stratagems" and killing the adversary with a "borrowed knife".

Lt Gen Singh, who looks after the Indian Army's capability development and sustenance vertical, said Beijing's support to Islamabad was not surprising as 81 per cent of the military hardware used by the Pakistani armed forces are from China.



Representational Image
PHOTO: PTI/AI IMAGE

> **We had one border and two adversaries, actually three. Pakistan was the front face. We had China providing all possible support. This is no surprise because if you look at statistics, in the last five years, 81 per cent of the military hardware that Pakistan is getting is all Chinese**
>
> —Lt Gen Rahul R Singh, Deputy Chief of Army Staff



He said Turkey also played an important role in providing support to Pakistan.

"We saw numerous drones coming and landing in the face of war, during the war, along with the in-dividuals who are there," he said.

The military officer underlined the need for India to learn its lessons from the conflict.

"The next important lesson is the importance of C4ISR (Command, Control, Communications, Com-puters, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance) and civil-military fusion. There is a lot to be done as far as this domain is concerned," he said.

"When the DGMO-level talks were on, Pakistan actually was mentioning that we know that your such and such vector is primed and ready for action. So they was getting live inputs from China. That is one place we really need to move fast and take appropriate action," Lt Gen. Singh said.

India launched Operation Sindoor on 7 May, targeting terrorist infrastructure in territories controlled by Pakistan, in response to the 22 April Pahalgam terror attack. —*PTI*

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India says it does not interfere in religion, faith

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

The Indian government does not take any position on matters concerning practices of faith and religion, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Friday, two days after the Dalai Lama asserted that a trust of Tibetan Buddhists will have the sole authority to recognise his future reincarnation.

MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said the government has always upheld freedom of religion for all in India and will continue to do so.

In a statement on Wednesday, the Dalai Lama said the Gaden Phodrang Trust has the sole authority to recognise his future reincarnation.

The trust was founded in 2015 by the Dalai Lama to oversee matters related to the institute of the Dalai Lama.

In a sharp reaction to his remarks, China said the Dalai Lama's reincarnation should be approved by the Chinese government. —*PTI*

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PAK, RUSSIA TO EXPAND ROAD, RAILS ACCESS

Islamabad, 4 July

Pakistan and Russia have agreed to collaborate on establishing a robust rail and road network to link the South Asian country with Central Asia and Russia, providing landlocked states direct access to warm waters, a media report said on Friday.

The initiative aims to transform Pakistan into a strategic transit hub by enhancing trade corridors and logistical routes extending to Russia and Central Asia, Geo News reported. —*PTI*

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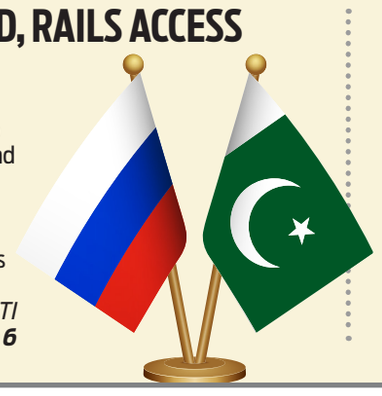

NO INTENTION TO CEDE KATCHATHEEVU: LANKA

Colombo, 4 July

Sri Lanka has no intention to cede the Katchatheevu island, Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath said, call-ing the "rumblings" in India an issue between the political parties in there.

However, Sri Lanka's diplomatic channels are open to resolve the issue, Herath on Thursday told Sira-sa TV in response to a question on the frequent arrests of Indian fishermen in Sri Lankan waters. He also claimed that the Indian government is not in favour of continuous "illegal" fishing in the Sri Lankan waters.

India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had earlier said that the issue of Sri Lanka arresting Indi-an fishermen stems from an agreement during the Emergency, imposed in 1975, under which their rights for fishing in some specific areas were given up. —*PTI*

India-US trade pact likely on 9 July

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

An Indian team has returned from Washington after holding talks with the US on an interim trade pact, which is likely to be finalised before 9 July, an official said. Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday said India does not enter trade agreements based on deadlines, but on mutual benefit and national interest. The team was led by chief negotiator Rajesh Agrawal, a special secretary in the department of commerce. 9 July marks the end of the 90-day suspension period of the Trump tariffs imposed on dozens of countries including India. —*PTI*

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Nipah alert issued in Kerala after two confirmed cases

T'PURAM, 4 JULY

The Kerala Health Deparment has issued a health alert in the districts of Kozhikode, Malappuram, and Palakkad following confirmation of two Nipah virus cases. The infections were detected in a 17-year-old girl from Malappuram and a 38-year-old woman from Palakkad. The teenager, initially admitted to a private hospital in Kozhikode with suspected encephalitis, died on 1 July. Her samples, tested at Kozhikode Medical College on 3 July, confirmed Nipah infection. A post-mortem was conducted, and the involved medical staff are now in quarantine, according to media reports. —*PTI*

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AIMIM seeks alliance with RJD for Bihar

PATNA, 4 JULY

In a significant political development ahead of Bihar's upcoming assembly elections, Asaduddin Owaisi's All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) has officially proposed an alliance with the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) as part of the Mahagathbandhan, which also includes the Congress and leftist parties. AIMIM's Bihar state president, Akhtarul Iman, reached out to RJD leader Lalu Prasad in a letter dated 2 July, asserting that the inclusion of AIMIM in the coalition would help consolidate secular votes and potentially secure victory for the Mahagathbandhan. —*PTI*

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10 neighbours must consent for pet dog in Surat

SURAT, 4 JULY

A no objection certificate (NOC) from at least 10 neighbours will now be required if residents of a housing soci-ety want to keep a pet dog at their home in Surat city of Gujarat, civic officials said on Friday. In case of a mul-ti-storey apartment building, the pet owner must submit an NOC issued by the chairperson and secretary of the residential building, said officials of the Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC). In view of some recent incidents, including a toddler's death in Ahmedabad following a pet canine's attack in May, the SMC has started issuing notices to dog owners, asking them to obtain a licence from the civic body. So far, 1,000 pet dog owners as well as societies have been served notices by the SMC and 300 people have already applied for obtaining licences. —*PTI*

CM seeks 10 days time from protesting farmers

Protesting farmers meet Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah over talks on the ongoing land acquisition issue in Devanahalli. Instead of the customary bouquets and shawls, the farmers greeted him with fruits and vegetables
PHOTO: SALAR

BENGALURU, 4 JULY

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramah on Friday said his government needs 10 days to clarify its stance on the acquisition of fertile land by Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board (KIADB) in Devanahalli to set up an aerospace park, following protests and outrage from farmer leaders and organisations.

On Friday, he met and held discussions with farmer representatives and organisations.

Citing legal challenges due to the final notification already issued, he said a meeting is scheduled on 15 July and the government's stance will be clarified in it.

"A number of organisations and protesters have joined in Devanahalli taluk's Channarayapatna. I had called them for a meeting today. As preliminary and final notifications have already been issued, there are some legal issues. So I have asked protesters for ten days..." Siddaramaiah told reporters after the meeting.

- Siddaramaiah told the farmers' representatives and organisations that there are some legal implications regarding the "abandoning" of the land acquisition process.

According to the CMO, Siddaramaiah told the farmers' representatives and organisations that there are some legal implications regarding the "abandoning" of the land acquisition process. Legal experts were offering their advice, it added. —*PTI*

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AI 'threatens' UK victims' kin over aid

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

The families of the victims of last month's the Air India (AI) plane crash in Ahmedabad have accused the airline of forcing them to fill up a form that includes financial disclosure. They said the airline has threatened to with-hold advance compensation unless they submitted the form.

The Tata Group had announced a compensation of Rs 1 crore for families of those killed in the crash while Air India announced an interim payment of Rs 25 lakh to the families of the victims and survivors.

Stewarts, a UK-based law firm that has partnered with Ahmedabad-based firm Nanavati and Nanavati to assist the affected families in claiming their compensation, said, "Our clients were told by Air India that they have to complete a questionnaire to receive an advance payment, forcing them to fill out this questionnaire in intense heat with no guidance on the terms and questions within it."

Air India, however, rejected the allegations. "Air India cannot process these payments in an information vacu-um. In order to facilitate payments, Air India has sought basic information to establish family relationships," it said on Friday. Air India said it has paid the compensation to families of nearly two-thirds of the victims. Meanwhile, India's aviation watchdog DGCA reprimanded Air India's budget carrier in March for not timely changing engine parts of an Airbus A320 as directed by the European Union's aviation safety agency, and falsifying records to show compliance. —*Agencies*

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Modi announces OCI cards for Indians in Trinidad & Tobago

PORT OF SPAIN, 4 JULY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during his visit to Trinidad and Tobago, announced that Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) cards will now be extended to sixth-generation Indian-origin citizens in the country. Addressing the Indian diaspora alongside Trinidad and Tobago's Prime Minister Kamla Per-sad-Bissessar, Modi highlighted the deep-rooted cultural ties between the nations.

With over 40 per cent of its population of Indian descent, Trinidad and Tobago hosts the largest Indi-an diaspora in the region, tracing back to indentured labourers who arrived in 1845.

Modi emphasised strengthening cooperation in trade, security, and technology. "India is not just making for itself but for the world," he said, pointing to India's emergence as the second-largest mo-bile phone manufacturer and a major defence exporter.

He also praised the adoption of India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) by Trinidad and Tobago, call-ing it a "revolution" in digital payments. "Nearly 50 per cent of the world's real-time digital transac-tions happen in India," Modi noted, lauding the Caribbean nation for pioneering UPI use in the region. —*PTI*

PM Narendra Modi being conferred with 'The Order of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago' - the country's highest civilian honour, by Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar
PHOTO: PTI

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SEBI BANS JANE STREET FROM MKT OVER ₹4K CR SCAM

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

Markets regulator Sebi has barred US-based Jane Street Group from the securities markets and di-rected the group to disgorge unlawful gains of Rs 4,843 crore for allegedly manipulating stock indices through positions taken in derivatives segment.

This could be the highest disgorgement amount ever directed by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi).

In its interim order, the regulator has debarred JSI Investments, JSI2 Investments Pvt Ltd, Jane Street Singapore Pte Ltd, and Jane Street Asia Trading, entities collectively referred to as the Jane Street Group -- from trading until further notice, while continuing its investigation.

Established in 2000, Jane Street Group LLC is a global proprietary trading firm in the financial services industry. It employs more than 2,600 people across five offices in the US, Europe, and Asia, and conducts trading operations in 45 countries. The Jane Street Group has come under Sebi's scrutiny for allegedly manipulating index levels in the stock market to earn illegal profits, primarily through the highly liquid Bank Nifty and Nifty index options segments. —*PTI*

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TAKES HER TO GODOWN

B'luru shopkeeper rapes girl who had come to buy chips

PHOTO: FREEPIK

BENGALURU, 4 JULLY

An eight-year-old girl was allegedly sexually assaulted by a shopkeeper when she went to buy a packet of chips, police said here on Friday.

The incident occurred on Thursday at around 8 pm in Bagalakunte police station limits, they said.

Following the incident, the accused shopkeeper was arrested.

According to police, the girl went to the shop near her house to buy a packet of chips. When she asked the 25-year-old shopkeeper for a packet of chips, he said he would have to bring it from the godown which was beside the shop.

In her complaint, the victim alleged that on the pretext of giving her chips, he took her to the go-down and touched her private parts, a senior police officer said.

She came home with the chips packet and started crying. When her aunt asked her the reason, she narrated her ordeal, he said.

The girl's parents immediately approached the police with a complaint following which a case of ag-gravated sexual assault was registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and the shopkeeper was arrested, he added. —*PTI*

DKS reviews bioenergy board's initiatives

BENGALURU, 4 JULY

Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC President DK Shivakumar reviewed Karnataka State Bioenergy Development Board's initiatives at Vidhana Soudha. Chairman SE Sudheendra submitted a one-year progress report and unveiled a bioenergy action plan. A new Karnataka State Bioenergy Policy is underway to attract Rs 1 lakh crore investment. Plans include biofuel bunks, UCO storage and supply, MoU with BBMP for CBG units, lab upgrades at GKVK, a Centre of Excellence at Yelahanka, and piped gas in housing projects. Hybrid biofuel use in tribal hamlets and investor incentives were also highlighted. Shivakumar appreciated the initiatives and assured full government support.
—Salar News

Couple killed, their 3 kids injured in Hosapete accident

VIJAYANAGAR, 4 JULY

A couple was killed and their three children injured when their car collided with a lorry in Mariyammanapalya in Hosapete taluk on Friday. Police identified the deceased couple as Muttappa Pujari, 35, and his wife Renuka, 30, and their injured children as Anushree, 9, Rupashri, 6, and Khushi, 4. The injured were admitted to a local government hospital at Hosapete. Police said the car in which the Pujari family was travelling in was completely crushed in the accident.
—Salar News

Woman dies in machine mishap at ex-Speaker's farm

SRINIVASAPUR, 4 JULY

A 31-year-old woman named Mangamma lost her life in a horrific accident at the farms of former speaker and Congress leader KR Ramesh Kumar in Bhoomireddypalli, Kolar village this morning. Reports indicate that she had been employed by Kumar's family just three days prior to the incident. Mangamma arrived on-site around 9.00am and was feeding grass into a high-tech cutting machine along with other workers. Tragically, at approximately 11.00am, her clothing became entangled with one of the machine's angled wheels, dragging her into the machinery. Despite colleagues' swift actions to switch off the machine, it was too late, and she was pronounced dead at the scene, according to Gownipalli Police Station Inspector Shivakumar. The farm, situated between Bhoomireddypalli and Hosahudya village, has been equipped with advanced machinery for cattle feed production. *—Salar News*

Mushtaq honoured for Booker Prize in Mysuru

SRINIVASAPUR, 4 JULY

Actor and activist Prakash Raj praised writer Banu Mushtaq on Friday for achieving the first International Booker Prize for Kannada literature. Speaking at a felicitation event hosted by Abhiruchi Publications to celebrate its 30th anniversary, Rai commended Mushtaq for her contributions over four decades, hailing her as a pride of State. Mushtaq's collection 'Heart Lamp,' translated into English by Deepa Basthi, highlights issues such as female struggle and discrimination. In her acceptance speech, Mushtaq emphasised the importance of preserving Mysuru's heritage buildings. She also advocated for social justice, vowing to continue her fight against inequality through her writing.
—Salar News

Believe in democracy: CM during farmers meeting

CM says government cannot take any action against the law

BENGALURU, 4 JULY

State Chief Minister Siddaramah on Friday met with several farmer leaders on the Devanahalli land acquisition by the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board (KIADB), where he affirmed his government's belief in democracy. During the meeting, several farmer unions, including the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) and the Kisan Sangharsh Samiti, and actor-turned-politician Prakash Raj, are said to have urged Siddaramaiah to cancel the land acquisition notification issued, but no decision was reached.

The farmers had been opposing the acquisition of over a thousand acres of land in 13 villages of Devanahalli taluk.

"We believe in democracy and dialogue. We have not obstructed any protests. I have myself been part of the farmers' organisation, and even though protests are being held against us, we have not attempted to suppress them," Siddaramaiah said.

"Since the final notification was already issued in April, there is a need to discuss the pros and cons (of shelving the acquisition process). Therefore, the government will require a period of 10 days to arrive at a clear decision," the CMO said in a statement.

"The government cannot take any actions contrary to the law. As the final notification has already been issued, there is a need to review its legal aspects. A preliminary meeting regarding this was held yesterday," the statement added.

"15 July has been fixed for the next meeting," Siddaramaiah added.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah addressed the gathering of farmer leaders who were protesting the Devanahalli land acquisition, at Vidhana Soudha, in Bengaluru on Friday *PHOTO: SALAR NEWS*

The farmers vowed to continue their protests until the next meeting. They warned that if a pro-farmer decision was not reached in the next meeting, they would intensify their struggle, with the backing of the SKM, according to the statement issued. *—PTI*

'CORRUPTION RATE CARD' ADS

HC grants DKS interim relief in defamation case

BENGALURU, 4 JULY

The Karnataka High Court on Friday granted interim relief to Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and stayed the trial court proceedings in a criminal defamation case filed against him by the State BJP unit over "corruption rate card" ads.

The court also granted relief to the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC), named co-accused in the case.

Justice SR Krishna Kumar then issued notice to the respondent and made it returnable on 29 July, effectively pausing the ongoing proceedings until further directions.

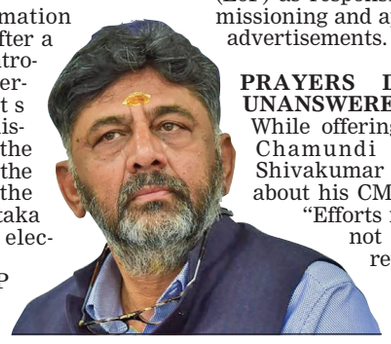
The defamation case arose after a series of controversial advertisements titled were displayed by the Congress in the run-up to the 2023 Karnataka Assembly elections.

The BJP has alleged that these advertisements falsely accused it of institutionalising corruption while in power, claiming that appointments and transfers in government departments came with fixed "rates" and "commissions."

The advertisements, published in local newspapers and promoted online, allegedly damaged the saffron party.

Of particular contention is the Congress' reference to the then BJP-led State government as a "trouble engine Sarkar", a wordplay on the BJP's self-description as a "double engine Sarkar".

The complaint specifically names Shivakumar and the then Leader of Opposition (LoP) as responsible for commissioning and approving the advertisements.



PRAYERS DON'T GO UNANSWERED

While offering prayers at Chamundi Hills, Shivakumar was asked about his CM aspirations. "Efforts may fail, but not prayers," he replied.
— Salar News with Agencies

HC grants Ravikumar interim relief in vulgar remarks case

BENGALURU, 4 JULY

Karnataka High Court on Friday granted interim relief to BJP Member of the Legislative Council (MLC) and Opposition Whip SN Ravikumar in connection with a case against him claiming that he made insulting and vulgar remarks about the State Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh.

Justice SR Krishna Kumar ordered the State not to take any coercive action against Ravikumar until 8 July, when his plea is scheduled to be heard. In the meantime, Ravikumar must cooperate with the ongoing police investigation, the Court added.

The case stems from Ravikumar's remarks on the Chief Secretary. He had allegedly said, "The Chief Secretary works at night for the State government and all day for the Chief Minister."

The comments drew immense backlash from several sections of society, resulting in the filing of the criminal case.

Senior Advocate Aruna Shyam representing Ravikumar called the proceedings politically motivated. He said that there was a context to Ravikumar's remarks and that the government was twisting the statement to suit their own purposes.

The State, represented by Special Public Prosecutor (SPP) BA Belliyappa, opposed any grant of stay on the case, arguing that police morale be hit if the Court were to halt the investigation.

The court, however, noted that complaint seemed to be based on TV report, while telling the State not to take any coercive action.
—Salar News with Agencies

> **The BJP thrives on having individuals like him in the Legislative Assembly and Council. This isn't the first time he has made such remarks, he has previously targeted Kalaburagi DC Fouzia Taranum as well.....The BJP's internal echo chamber is such that the more divisive their statements are, and the more they demean women — the more they are appreciated and encouraged by their high command**
>
> -Mansoor Ali Khan, Congress AICC Secretary told Salar Digital YouTube

Flood alert announced in Uttara Kannada

KARWAR, 4 JULY

A flood alert was announced in Uttara Kannada district, as heavy rains filled the Kadra reservoir, necessitating a release of 33,000 cusecs of water to the Kali river on Friday. Rains continued to pound the district with the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) issuing a red alert.

As per the directions of the district administration, the Irrigation Department opened 4 crest gates to release the water, urging residents on the banks of the river to exercise caution. To maintain water level, the water is expected to be released everyday until rains recede.

Educational institutions up to Pre-University in Uttara Kannada, Dakshina Kannada and Chikkamagaluru districts also declared holiday on Friday. *—Salar News*

ED attaches ₹34 crore of assets in Ranya Rao case

MYSURU, 4 JULY

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) alleged on Friday that Kannada actor Ranya Rao "orchestrated" a "well-structured" operation with her associates for smuggling gold into India as it attached her assets worth more than Rs 34 crore as part of a money-laundering investigation.

Harshavardini Ranya alias Ranya Rao, 32, was arrested by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence from Kempegowda International Airport on 3 March after she landed from Dubai. Officials recovered 14.2 kg of gold bars worth Rs 12.56 crore from her possession.

The ED said that the involvement of public servants is under scrutiny as she was "assisted" upon arrival.

The ED said a provisional order was issued under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) to attach Rao's house in Victoria Layout, a plot located in Arkavathi Layout, an industrial land in Tumkur and land in Anekal, for Rs 34 crore.

The actor's "involvement" in generating, possessing and circulating proceeds of crime was "corroborated" by her digital footprint, establishing her "active role" in the syndicate, the ED said. *—PTI*

Khandre suggests removing 4 officials over tiger deaths

BENGALURU, 4 JULY

State Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre on Friday recommended the suspension of Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCF) Y Chakrapani and three other officials for negligence and dereliction of duty in connection with the "unnatural deaths" of five tigers in the Male Mahadeshwara (MM) Hills, officials said.

Khandre's decision came after reviewing the preliminary report submitted by a high-level inquiry committee headed by Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (APCCF) Kumar Pushkar, which was set up to probe the incident.

A female tigress and her four cubs were found dead in the Hugyam range of the MM Hills on 26 June after eating a cow carcass that was allegedly sprayed with poison by three people, who were later held.

Khandre recommended departmental inquiries into their conduct, with a report to be submitted by 10 July.

It was also alleged that for the past three months, frontline contract staff had not been paid their wages or allowances, which hampered patrolling activities, contributing to the incident.

"Failure to ensure timely payment, especially by Chakrapani, is seen as a serious dereliction of duty," Khandre's office said. *—PTI*

HC quashes unnatural sex case against Ranjith

BENGALURU, 4 JULY

Karnataka High Court on Friday quashed an unnatural sex case against Malayalam filmmaker Ranjith Balakrishnan. Justice SR Krishna Kumar ruled the complaint false, citing factual inconsistencies, including the claim that the alleged 2012 incident occurred at the Taj Hotel near Bengaluru Airport.

The complainant claimed he was invited to the fourth floor of the hotel, where the alleged incident occurred. He also provided a detailed description of the events. The court questioned the 12-year delay in filing the complaint, calling it a "classic case of falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus." The case was first registered in Kozhikode before being transferred to State. *—PTI*

WAQF HUMAN CHAIN

ALL INDIA MUSLIM PERSONAL LAW BOARD
آل انڈیا مسلم پرسنل لا بورڈ
وقف ترمیمی قانون دستور کے بنیادی حقوق اور مسلمانوں کی مذہبی شناخت پر حملہ ہے!
#WithdrawWaqfAmendments #SaveWaqfSaveConstitution
All India Muslim Personal Law Board
WITHDRAW THE DIVISIVE AND UNJUST 'WAQF AMENDMENT ACT' IMMEDIATELY!
#WithdrawWaqfAmendments #SaveWaqfSaveConstitution

Muslims take part in a human chain against Waqf Amendment Act after Juma Namaz, at Kundasang Eidgah Maidan, Millers Road, Bengaluru on Friday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

NO PERMISSION

M'luru: SDPI members booked for sending WhatsApp texts about protests

MANGALURU, 4 JULY

A case was registered against individuals for allegedly circulating WhatsApp messages about a protest meeting in Bantwal, Dakshina Kannada, despite having been denied permission for the event, police said on Friday.

Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) member Ashraf Talapady and two others had sought permission to use loudspeakers and make security arrangements for a protest over the alleged murder cases of Abdul Rahiman and Ashraf, a native of Wayanad.

However, the Bantwal Town Police rejected the request after the applicants reportedly admitted they had no concrete information, evidence, or family petitions regarding government compensation or the alleged conspirators in either case.

The applicants were advised to approach the investigating officers and the authorities concerned through proper legal channels.

Despite this, some individuals allegedly circulated digital posters about the protest on WhatsApp, prompting police to register a fresh case. Further legal action is being initiated, police added.

Abdul Rahiman, 32, was killed in Kuryal village under Bantwal Rural Police Station limits on 27 May. In a separate incident on 27 April, Ashraf, a native of Wayanad, was allegedly lynched after reportedly shouting 'Pakistan Zindabad' during a local cricket match.

Both the incidents highlighted the fragility of communal relations in the region. *—PTI*

NIA arrests key accused in Praveen Nettaru murder case

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday arrested a key accused in connection with the brutal murder of BJP Yuva Morcha leader Praveen Nettaru in State, officials said.

The accused, Abdul Rahaman was absconding for the last two years and he carried a Rs 4 lakh reward for his arrest.

He was taken into custody by the NIA team at the Kannur International Airport in Kerala on his arrival from Qatar, they said.

In April 2025, NIA filed a chargesheet against four accused, including Rahaman and two others who are still absconding. This takes the total number of accused in the murder case to 28.

Nettaru was killed with sharp weapons allegedly by members of the banned Popular Front of India, on 26 July 2022, in Dakshina Kannada's Bellare village.

Praveen Nettaru *PHOTO: PTI*

The murder was reportedly motivated by a larger conspiracy to strike terror and unleash communal hatred in the society, said the NIA.

Meanwhile, search is underway to track down and arrest the remaining absconders.
—Salar News with Agencies

BEML announces major infra boost in KGF

KOLAR, 4 JULY

As part of its efforts to strengthen India's indigenous defence manufacturing ecosystem, BEML Limited, a Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Defence, has unveiled a major infrastructure expansion at its KGF complex.

Built to support the servicing of Armoured Recovery Vehicles (ARVs) and for manufacturing their advanced variants, the three new facilities mark a new chapter in the production capabilities of the BEML. Designed for smart manufacturing, these facilities will enable high output in production, rapid integration and quality-controlled assembly – empowering the BEML to meet defence needs of the country. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: PTI

YSRCP slams Naidu for 'abandoning' mango farmers

AMARAVATI, 4 JULY

YSRCP on Friday alleged that the N Chandrababu Naidu-led Andhra Pradesh government "abandoned the interests of mango farmers" despite being part of the NDA alliance at the Centre. Citing the Market Intervention Scheme implemented by Congress-ruled Karnataka government for its mango farmers, opposition party said state government failed in securing relief from Centre. Despite being part of NDA alliance, the TDP government has completely abandoned the interests of mango farmers and taken no meaningful steps to secure relief from the Centre," the party posted on X. Farmers are facing severe "financial distress due to market collapse", lack of Minimum Support Price, and refusal of pulp factories to procure their produce, it added. *—PTI*

CBI to probe into Kerala man missing from UAE

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

The CBI has taken over investigation into the disappearance of a 23-year old Kerala resident, who has been missing since 2023, officials said. The agency has registered an FIR on the directions of the Kerala High Court on a plea by the man's father. Jamsheer, a B. Sc Electronics degree holder, had gone to the UAE on 13 November, 2022 in search of employment. His father said in his plea that he regularly communicated with the family till 29 March, 2023. However, the communications stopped after 4 April, 2023, and his phone was switched off. Two days later, his elder brother received a WhatsApp message from Jamsheer's mobile number, saying he had been arrested at Nepal airport with 1.5 kg of gold. *—PTI*

HC seeks state's reply on Majithia's plea against arrest

CHANDIGARH, 4 JULY

Punjab and Haryana High Court has requested the Punjab Advocate General to respond to Shiromani Akali Dal leader Bikram Singh Majithia's plea seeking protection from arrest in a disproportionate assets case. Justice Tribhuvan Dahiya postponed the hearing to 8 July, without granting interim relief to Majithia. Majithia's counsel, Arshdeep Singh Kler, noted that the court asked the Advocate General, Maninderjit Singh Bedi, to seek instructions regarding the plea. The court also requested an amended remand order, as a district court had revised the remand date from 5 to 6 July. Majithia was arrested by the Punjab Vigilance Bureau on 25 June, linked to allegations of laundering Rs 540 crore of "drug money." *—PTI*

Building collapse: Kerala govt denies delay in giving aid

T'PURAM, 4 JULY

Kerala Cooperation Minister VN Vasavan defended the search and rescue efforts following the tragic collapse of a toilet complex at Kottayam Medical College, which resulted in death of 52-year-old Bindu and injuries to three others. Protests erupted across the state, led by the opposition Congress and BJP, calling for Health Minister Veena George's resignation, accusing the government of negligence. Vasavan dismissed allegations of delayed operations as politically motivated, asserting that necessary equipment was delayed due to access issues. Health Minister George outlined a newly developed "Hospital Safety Plan" aimed at enhancing safety in Kerala's health facilities. As the family mourned, Congress leaders visited, demanding financial assistance and a judicial inquiry into the incident. *—PTI*

China warns India against interfering in Tibet issues

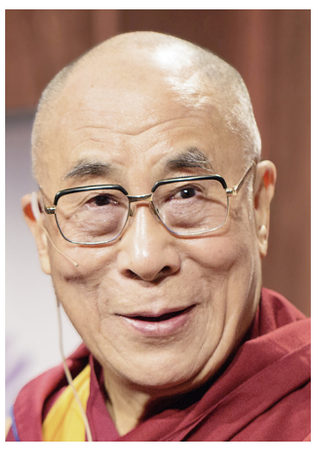
This comes after India backs Dalai Lama's incarnation

BEIJING, 4 JULY

China on Friday objected to Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju's remarks that the incarnation of the Dalai Lama should follow his own wishes, urging India to act cautiously on Tibet-related issues to avoid its impact on the improvement of bilateral relations.

India should be clear of the anti-China separatist nature of the 14th Dalai Lama and honour its commitments on Xizang (Tibet) related issues, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told a media briefing here responding to a question on Rijiju's comments. China refers to Tibet as Xizang.

India should exercise caution in its words and actions, stop interfering in China's internal affairs with Xizang related issues and avoid impact on the improvement and development of the China-India relationship, Mao said.



Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju, Dalai Lama PHOTO: PTI

Rijiju on Thursday asserted that the decision on the incarnation of the Dalai Lama would be taken by the established institution and the leader of Tibetan Buddhists himself and no one else.

It was the first reaction from a senior Indian government functionary on the comments of the Dalai Lama on his successor.

On Wednesday, the Tibetan spiritual leader said that the institution of the Dalai Lama will continue, and only the Gaden Phodrang Trust - founded by his office in 2015 - will have the authority to recognise his future reincarnation.

Rijiju's remarks came after China rejected the Nobel Peace laureate's succession plan, insisting that any future heir must receive its seal of approval.

Rijiju, a practising Buddhist, and Rajiv Ranjan Singh, a fellow Union minister, are representing the Government of India at the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday celebrations in Dharamshala on 6 July.

The minister said that the birthday event is a religious function and has nothing to do with politics.

The present 14th Dalai Lama went through this procedure and was approved by the then-central government, she said. *—PTI*

90-DAY SUSPENSION PERIOD

India-US trade pact likely to happen before 9 July

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

An Indian team has returned from Washington after holding talks with the US on an interim trade pact, which is likely to be finalised before 9 July, but discussions will continue as certain issues in the agri and auto sectors still need to be resolved, an official said.

The team was led by chief negotiator Rajesh Agrawal, a special secretary in the department of commerce.

The official said that the talks are in the last phase and its conclusion is expected to be announced before 9 July, which marks the end of 90-day suspension period of Trump tariffs imposed on dozens of countries including India.

India has raised the issue of 25 per cent duty in auto sectors in the Safeguards committee of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

India has also informed the

WTO that it has reserved the right to impose retaliatory duties on select US products in response to American tariffs on steel and aluminium.

On 26 March, 2025, US adopted a control measure in form of a tariff increase of 25 per cent ad valorem on imports of passenger vehicles and light trucks, and on certain automobile parts in or from India, a communication sent by India to WTO said. *—PTI*

For New India, even sky is no limit: Modi

PORT OF SPAIN, 4 JULY

India will soon be among the top three economies of the world, and its missions on artificial intelligence, semiconductor and quantum computing are becoming the new engines of growth, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said.

In an address at a gathering of the Indian diaspora on Thursday, Modi said India is a land of opportunities today, and the fruits of its growth and progress are reaching the "most needy".

"For New India, even the sky is not the limit."

He attended the event hours after landing in Trinidad and Tobago in the second leg of his five-nation tour. It is the first bilateral visit by an Indian PM to this Caribbean island nation since 1999.

Trinidad and Tobago's PM Kamla Persad-Bissessar, members of her cabinet, lawmakers and several other dignitaries were among over 4,000 people who attended the event.

Modi lavished praise on the Indian community in Trinidad and Tobago, and said India has shown that poverty can be defeated by empowering the poor and that crores of people, for the first time, have developed the confidence that the country can be freed from poverty.

Additionally, during his address to the Indian community in Trinidad and Tobago on Thursday, Modi underlined Bihar's historic and cultural importance, praised the courage of the Indian diaspora, and called PM Kamla Persad-Bissessar "daughter of Bihar", as he recalled her ancestral ties to the state and requested her to offer water from the Sarayu and the Mahakumbh to the Ganga Dhara in the Caribbean nation. *—PTI*

MODI'S GIFT TO TRINIDAD & TOBAGO'S PM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the exchange of gifts with the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago Kamla Persad-Bissessar, in Port of Spain PHOTO: PTI

- Holy water of Sangam and Saryu River from Mahakumbh
- Replica of Ram Mandir

AIMIM seeks alliance with RJD

PATNA, 4 JULY

In a significant political development ahead of Bihar's upcoming assembly elections, Asaduddin Owaisi's All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) has officially proposed an alliance with the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) as part of the Mahagathbandhan, which also includes the Congress and leftist parties. AIMIM's Bihar state president, Akhtarul Iman, reached out to RJD leader Lalu Prasad in a letter dated 2 July, asserting that the inclusion of AIMIM in the coalition would help consolidate secular votes and potentially secure victory for the Mahagathbandhan. Iman recalled that AIMIM attempted to join the alliance during the last assembly polls, and indicated Owaisi's willingness to collaborate with Congress and leftist leaders.

Contrarily, RJD MP Manoj Jha suggested that AIMIM should refrain from contesting in the elections, advocating instead for "in-principle" support for the Mahagathbandhan to strengthen the opposition against what he termed "right-wing dictatorship" and hatred.

In a related context, the Congress party has voiced strong objections to the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar, labelling it a "sinister exercise" that risks disenfranchising millions of voters just ahead of the elections. The Congress, alongside several opposition parties, expressed concerns about the timing and implications of this electoral move, alleging that it undermines the integrity of the electoral system in the state. The Election Commission met with these parties this week to address their concerns about the ongoing roll revision. *—PTI*

TVK declares actor Vijay as TN's CM candidate

CHENNAI, 4 JULY

Actor-turned-politician Vijay, founder and chief of the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), has been named the party's chief ministerial candidate for the 2026 Assembly elections. This announcement was made during a special executive committee meeting, where the party also proposed a statewide conference and village meetings to promote its ideology. Vijay stated that TVK would not form alliances with either the ruling DMK or the BJP, condemning the latter for attempting to exploit religious divisions for political gain.

In a related development, DMK accused BJP-led Centre of misleading the public about financial allocations to Tamil Nadu. The party's official organ, "Murasoli," claimed that Centre had betrayed the state's interests and highlighted a lack of significant central schemes for TN over last decade. *—PTI*

'RaGa Padman' plan in Bihar sees backlash

PATNA, 4 JULY

The Congress party in Bihar has announced a plan to distribute free sanitary napkins to 5 lakh women, but has faced criticism from the ruling NDA due to the inclusion of Rahul Gandhi's photograph on the packets. State Congress chief Rajesh Kumar launched the initiative at the BPCC headquarters, linking it to the proposed Mai Bahin Samman Yojana, which promises a monthly stipend of Rs 2,500. JD(U) MLC Neeraj Kumar condemned the use of Gandhi's image, stating it disrespects women's dignity, while BJP spokesman Kuntal Krishna accused the Congress of ideological bankruptcy. In response, women's wing president Alka Lamba highlighted the pressing issue of women in Bihar lacking proper menstrual care, criticising the BJP's stance as anti-women. *—PTI*

AIADMK alleges custodial torture victim had 50 external injuries

CHENNAI, 4 JULY

The AIADMK has raised serious concerns following the autopsy report of Ajith Kumar, a temple guard from Sivaganga district, who allegedly died due to police torture.

The party claims that the report indicates Kumar suffered 50 external injuries, describing the aggressors as "animals in the form of humans."

Citing the report from a state-run hospital, the AIADMK outlined the horrific details of the injuries, including severe head trauma and

burns from cigarettes. They questioned the need for a special police team to investigate a minor jewellery theft case, hinting at deeper motives behind the brutal treatment.

The incident came to light after a woman reported the theft of gold jewellery from her car, leading the police to interrogate Kumar, who later died on 28 June due to apparent police violence. Madras High Court's Madurai Bench remarked that even a murderer would not inflict such extensive harm.

In response to the incident, Chief Minister MK Stalin ordered a transfer of case to CBI and pledged full support to the investigation, expressing outrage over Kumar's death. On behalf of DMK, Minister KR Periyakaruppan also extended financial assistance to Kumar's grieving family. *—PTI*

ED case very strange, Sonia argues

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

Senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for Congress leader Sonia Gandhi, on Friday termed the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) National Herald case as "truly a strange" and "unprecedented" matter.

His remarks came during his rebuttal following Additional Solicitor General SV Raju's arguments on the court's cognisance of the chargesheet on 3 July.

"This is a supposed money laundering case without any property being used, projected, or enjoyed," Singhvi argued.

The ED has alleged that Sonia and Rahul Gandhi,

along with the late Congress leaders Motilal Vora and Oscar Fernandes, Suman Dubey, Sam Pitroda, and Young Indian Pvt Ltd, were involved in a conspiracy to fraudulently acquire over Rs 2,000 crore worth of assets belonging to Associated Journals Limited (AJL), which published the National Herald.

- The ED claims the Gandhis controlled 76 per cent of Young Indian, which took over AJL's assets in lieu of a Rs 90 crore loan.

The ED claims the Gandhis controlled 76 per cent of Young Indian, which took over AJL's assets in lieu of a Rs 90 crore loan.

Singhvi argued the transaction aimed to make AJL debt-free and stressed that Young Indian was a not-for-profit entity. He also questioned the ED's delay, saying it acted only after a private complaint. *—PTI*

TIT FOR TAT

Marathi row: Victim slaps 'attacker' in Sena leader's presence

A man accused of assaulting the victim is seen apologising PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

MUMBAI/THANE, 4 JULY

A man slapped one of his alleged attackers in the presence of Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Rajan Vichare, as tensions over the use of Marathi flared up in Thane district this week.

In a viral video shot inside Vichare's office, two men accused of assaulting the victim over a mobile recharge dispute are seen bowing and touching his feet in apology.

One of them is slapped by the man, while Vichare — a former MP — watches, surrounded by supporters. A voice is also heard saying, "Speak in Marathi since you have hit a Marathi person."

- The altercation had occurred outside Thane railway station on Tuesday night and was reportedly sparked by a disagreement over mobile recharge.

The altercation had occurred outside Thane railway station on Tuesday night and was reportedly sparked by a disagreement over mobile recharge. The two accused were summoned to Vichare's office on Thursday, after footage of the scuffle began circulating online.

In a separate but related incident, seven members of the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) were detained for allegedly assaulting a food stall owner in Bhayander for not speaking Marathi. A video of the attack shows the men, some wearing MNS scarves, confronting the vendor, shouting at him and slapping him. Kashimira police registered a case under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita for rioting, threatening, and assault. The accused were later released after being issued notices. Officials said preventive "chapter proceedings" are underway and the men will be made to sign good behaviour bonds.

The incidents come amid a rising push by MNS workers to enforce the use of Marathi in public spaces, including banks and shops across Maharashtra.

Coinciding with the uproar, the Maharashtra government has declared 3 October as 'Classical Marathi Language Day', marking the date when the Centre conferred classical status on Marathi in 2024.

The week of 3 – 9 October will be observed annually with events promoting the language's 2,500-year heritage through exhibitions, lectures, and digitisation projects across government and educational institutions. *—PTI*

Telangana factory blast toll climbs to 39

HYDERABAD, 4 JULY

The death toll from the explosion at Sigachi Industries' pharmaceutical plant in Sangareddy district has risen to 39, after one critically injured person succumbed to burns, Superintendent of Police Paritosh Pankaj confirmed on Friday. As of the morning, 22 people remained in hospital. At the time of the blast, 143 workers were present; 61 were declared safe, and 12 have since been discharged. Nine workers are still missing. The identities of 31 deceased workers have been confirmed. A government-appointed expert committee visited the site on Thursday to determine the cause of the explosion and reconstruct the sequence of events. This is one of the worst industrial tragedies in Telangana in recent times. Investigations are ongoing. *—PTI*

Arrests in Bengal's Kaliganj blast case rise to 10

KOLKATA, 4 JULY

Police have arrested one more person in connection with the death of a girl in a bomb explosion at Kaliganj in West Bengal's Nadia district, a senior official said on Friday. The accused was nabbed from Palashi in the district on Thursday night, taking the total number of arrests in the case to 10, he said. A 13-year-old girl was killed in Molandi village of Kaliganj after bombs were allegedly hurled from a Trinamool Congress victory celebration, which was taken out even before the results of the assembly bypoll were officially announced on 23 June. Earlier, nine people were arrested for their alleged involvement in the incident. "The person arrested from Palashi will be produced before a local court on Friday," the official said. A total of 24 people have been named in the FIR. *—PTI*

TN councillor hacked to death by husband

CHENNAI, 4 JULY

A woman councillor from Thiruninravur, in the western suburbs of Chennai, was allegedly hacked to death by her husband on Thursday night, police said. The victim, 38-year-old S Gomathi, had contested as an independent and won in the local civic elections. Her husband, Stephen Raj, reportedly attacked her with a sharp weapon near their home in Periyar Colony, inflicting fatal injuries. Gomathi died at the scene. Raj later surrendered to the police. The couple had been married for around ten years and were both associated with the Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) party. Police have cited personal reasons as the likely motive behind the killing. A murder case has been registered, and further investigation is ongoing. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Arjit becomes most followed musician on Spotify

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

'Tum Hi Ho' singer Arijit Singh has edged past global pop stars Taylor Swift and Ed Sheeran to emerge as the most followed artist on Spotify with 151 million followers. Swift is in second place with 139.6 million followers while Sheeran is at number three with 121 million followers, according to the listing released by data tracking websites Chartmasters and Volt. The other Indians who feature in the list are AR Rahman, Pritam and Neha Kakkar. Arijit's rise in the Indian music industry has been nothing short of meteoric. The 38-year-old started as a contestant on reality show 'Fame Gurukul' in 2005 but broke into the big league eight years later with the soulful hit 'Tum Hi Ho' from 'Aashiqui 2' in 2013. *—PTI*

Nipah alert in Kerala after 2 positive cases confirmed

26 special teams deployed in two affected district for testing

T'PURAM, 4 JULY

The Kerala Health Department has issued a health alert in the districts of Kozhikode, Malappuram, and Palakkad following confirmation of two Nipah virus cases. The infections were detected in a 17-year-old girl from Malappuram and a 38-year-old woman from Palakkad.

The teenager, initially admitted to a private hospital in Kozhikode with suspected encephalitis, died on 1 July. Her samples, tested at Kozhikode Medical College on 3 July, confirmed Nipah infection. A post-mortem was conducted, and the involved medical staff are now in quarantine, according to media reports.

The second case involves a woman from Nattukal in Palakkad, who was under observation in Perinthalmanna. She had been taken to three private hospitals in Palakkad before being admitted to a private facility in Perinthalmanna. Her initial test was done at Manjeri Medical College, with confirmatory testing later carried out at the National Institute of Virology (NIV) in Pune.

- District collectors have been instructed to establish containment zones, and public announcements are underway to raise awareness

Following these confirmations, 26 special teams have been deployed in each affected district to conduct contact tracing, monitor symptoms, and inform the public. Police assistance has been requested to identify those who may have been exposed to the infected individuals.

District collectors have been instructed to establish containment zones, and public announcements are underway to raise awareness.

State and local helplines are being set up to assist residents. Authorities are also checking for any recent unexplained or unnatural deaths—an early indicator of possible outbreaks.

A high-level meeting is scheduled for this evening to assess the situation and reinforce precautionary measures. *—PTI*

BROTHERHOOD AND PEACE

Amid security concerns, thousands of people belonging to the Shia community take out a peaceful Muharram procession for the third consecutive year at Srinagar in Kashmir on Friday PHOTO: PTI

PIL against Prada in Kolhapuri row

MUMBAI, 4 JULY

A PIL has been filed in the Bombay High Court against Prada for its alleged unauthorised use of the Kolhapuri chappals, and sought compensation to be paid to Indian artisans for allegedly copying their design.

Prada in its spring/summer collection showcased their 'toe-ring sandals', which the petition said are deceptively similar to the Kolhapur chappal. These sandals are priced at Rs 1 lakh per pair.

"The Kolhapuri chappal is the cultural symbol of Maharashtra," the plea filed by six Pune-based lawyers said.

It has sought a direction to Prada from commercialising and using its 'toe-ring sandals' without any authorisation, and for the fashion group to issue a public apology and acknowledge the use of Kolhapuri chappals.

PHOTO: PRADA/@INSTAGRAM

The plea said the Kolhapuri chappals are already protected as a Geographical Indication (GI) under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act. "The court shall also order a permanent injunction against Prada's unauthorised GI use and to compensate the artisans' community for reputational and economic damages," the PIL said.

By way of interim order, the PIL has sought damages and compensation to be paid to the artisans' community, including a temporary injunction restraining Prada from marketing, selling or exporting their sandals. *—PTI*

Houses damaged in a cloudburst at Seraj Valley in Mandi PHOTO: ANI

Monsoon fury kills 43 in Himachal

SHIMLA, 4 JULY

A total of 43 people have been killed and at least 37 have gone missing as cloudbursts, flash floods, landslides ravaged Himachal Pradesh in the past two weeks, officials said on Friday.

The monsoon hit the state on 20 June and has cost the state Rs 5,000 crore in damages. Of the 43 deaths, 14 were killed in cloudbursts, eight in flash floods and one in a landslide, while seven were drowned.

The most deaths, 17, took place in Mandi district where 10 instances of cloudbursts, flash floods and landslides wreaked havoc on Tuesday. A search is still on for 31 people missing from this district alone, officials said.

On Friday, the soldiers from the National Disaster Response Force rescued 65 people trapped in Bharad, Deji, Payala and Rukchui villages after heavy rain.

BRIDGES DAMAGED

The administration in Maharashtra's Palghar district has identified 85 flood-hit bridges and roads for urgent repairs, an official said on Friday.

According to an official release, Palghar guardian minister Ganesh Naik had asked the authorities to fix bridges and roads affected by floods. Government engineers have been asked to submit the budget for the work, it said.

2 IAF MEN DROWN

Meanwhile, amid heavy rains in Uttarakhand, two Indian Air Force personnel drowned in a swollen lake in Bhimtal, officials said on Friday. Prince Yadav, 22, from Punjab's Pathankot and Sahil Kumar, 23, from Bihar's Muzaffarpur were part of a group of eight IAF personnel, including four women, vacationing in Nainital, Circle Officer Pramod Shah said. *—PTI*

Kolkata gangrape survivor afraid to attend college

KOLKATA, 4 JULY

The first-year student who was gang-raped on the South Calcutta Law College campus on 25 June is unwilling to return to college due to safety concerns, a close friend of the survivor told the West Bengal Women's Commission, panel chairperson Leena Gangopadhyay said on Friday.

The survivor's friend, who accompanied her during a meeting with the Commission, said she was not willing to return to the college where the crime took place. The unnamed friend also suggested that the survivor be transferred to another law college, shared the chairperson.

After the meeting, the Commission has recommended that the State government take all necessary steps to support the survivor, including psychological support and transferring her to another college if needed.

The student who was allegedly gang-raped on campus for over three hours on 25 June filed an FIR the following day. *—PTI*

NEET-UG: SC junks plea to reconsider results

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

The Supreme Court on Friday declined to entertain a petition challenging the NEET-UG 2025 results due to an alleged error in one of the questions.

A bench of Justices P S Narasimha and R Mahadevan said it had dismissed a similar petition two days ago and it can't deal with individual examinations.

"We have dismissed identical matters. We agree there might be multiple correct answers. But we cannot interfere in an exam which is given by lakhs of candidates. It's not an individual's case. Thousands of students will be affected," the bench said.

The top court was hearing a petition filed by a candidate seeks correction of the alleged mistake and revision of results.

The plea also sought a stay on the counselling process. The National Eligibility cum Entrance test (NEET) is a nationwide entrance exam conducted by the National Testing Agency. *—PTI*

MAN DETAINED IN PUNE TECHIE 'RAPE' IS A FRIEND: COP

PUNE, 4 JULY

A suspect detained in the alleged rape of a Pune IT professional at her home was her friend and not a stranger who gained entry by posing as a courier delivery agent, police said on Friday, casting doubt on her version of the events.

Police commissioner Amitesh Kumar said. "They know each other for a couple of years."

The 22-year-old woman had claimed that a man who posed as a courier delivery agent entered her flat in Kondhwa area on Wednesday evening when she was alone, and forced himself on her. She passed out, and when she regained consciousness, he was gone, she said.

But after detaining the suspect, who is a highly qualified professional, the police found that the woman herself had taken a selfie, which originally showed his face clearly, edited it, and also typed the purported threatening message.

No chemical spray had been used to make her unconscious (as suspected earlier), Kumar said. *—PTI*

CBI raids pharmacy body chief's premises

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

The CBI has conducted searches at the premises of Pharmacy Council of India (PCI) President Montu M Patel after he was booked for alleged corruption and systemic irregularities in the inspection and approval processes for pharmacy colleges, officials said on Friday.

The action against Patel was taken based on the findings of a preliminary enquiry (PE) which showed instances of alleged corruption, control and potential manipulation in granting approvals to colleges, besides initial allegations against him of pre-election inducements and post-election nepotism. The PE showed that up to December 2022, inspections were conducted in offline mode, necessitating visits to college sites by PCI teams and the preparation of reports in a standard format.

The CBI has also busted a network of officials of Union health ministry, National Medical Commission, intermediaries and representatives of private medical colleges allegedly involved in a litany of "egregious" acts, including corruption and unlawful manipulation of the regulatory framework governing medical colleges. It has named 34 people in an FIR. *—PTI*

PHOTO: REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

Haunted by guilt, man admits to murder 40 yrs ago

KOZHIKODE, 4 JULY

For nearly four decades, Muhammadali lived with a secret he could no longer bear. On Friday, he walked into a police station at Vengara in Malappuram district and calmly confessed to a crime he says he committed as a teenager in 1986 – the killing of a man whose name no one ever knew.

Now in his 50s, Muhammadali told officers that the incident took place when he was 14 years old. He had been working on the property of a man named Devassya in the quiet village of Koodaranji, under Thiruvambady police station limits in Kozhikode district.

One day, he said, a man tried to harass him. In self-defence, he kicked the man, who fell into a nearby stream. Panicked, the teenager fled the scene. Two days later, he returned to find the man's lifeless body still in the water. Fearing the worst, he stayed silent, according to his account to the police. *—PTI*

CONDUCTED IN 13 LANGUAGES

CUET-UG candidate scores 100% in 4 out of 5 subjects

The CUET-UG 2025 was conducted in 300 cities, including 15 cities outside the country PHOTO: X

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

One candidate has scored 100 percentile in four subjects in the Common Entrance University Test-Under Graduate (CUET-UG), while 17 candidates from across the country have bagged the top score in three subjects, the National Testing Agency (NTA) on Friday announced.

The NTA conducted CUET-UG in computer-based test (CBT) mode for 13,54,699 candidates.

These candidates applied for various combinations of subjects for the academic session 2025-2026.

"Only one candidate has scored 100 percentile in his or her opted four out of five subjects. A total of 17 candidates have scored 100 percentile in three subjects, while 150 candidates have scored 100 percentile in two subjects. A total of 2,679 candidates have scored 100 percentile in one subject," said a senior NTA official.

In total, 37 subjects (13 languages, 23 domain-specific subjects and General Aptitude Test) were offered to the candidates in the CUET-UG 2025.

- Of the 13,54,699 candidates who appeared in the test, 17 have bagged the top score in three subjects, the National Testing Agency announced on Friday

Candidates could choose up to a maximum of five subjects, including languages and the General Aptitude Test.

322 unique question papers and 1,059 total question papers, including 13 languages (total 57,940 questions), were administered over a period of 19 days in 35 shifts.

The medium of the question paper was in 13 languages, including English, Hindi, Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu.

The CUET-UG 2025 was conducted in 300 cities, including 15 cities outside the country in Abu Dhabi, Doha, Dubai, Munich, Kathmandu, Kuala Lumpur, Kuwait City, Lagos, Manama, Muscat, Riyadh, Sharjah, Singapore, West Java and Washington. *—PTI*

Will Trump's big bill revive Dems? It may not be easy

It is big and it is beautiful, says President Donald Trump.

But for many Democratic leaders, the tax break and spending cut package adopted by Trump's Republican allies in Congress Thursday represents the key to the Democratic Party's resurgence.

Even before the final vote was tallied, Democratic officials were finalising ambitious plans for rallies, voter registration drives, attack ads, bus tours and even a multiday vigil, all designed to highlight the most controversial elements of Trump's "big beautiful" bill: the deep cuts to the nation's safety net that will leave nearly 12 million more Americans without health coverage and millions of others without food assistance, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office.

Indeed, in political battlegrounds across Alaska and Iowa, Pennsylvania and California, Democrats have already begun to use Trump's bill to bludgeon their Republican rivals. Democrats are promising that the package, Trump's biggest domestic policy achievement to date, will be the defining issue of every major election between now and next fall's high-stakes midterms.

"One thing is abundantly clear: Republicans own this mess and it's an albatross around their necks heading into the midterms," Democratic National Committee Chair Ken Martin told The Associated Press.

"This is the least popular legislation in modern history, and the more voters learn about it, the more they hate it. That's a clear directive for Democrat, we're going to make sure every single voter knows who is responsible."

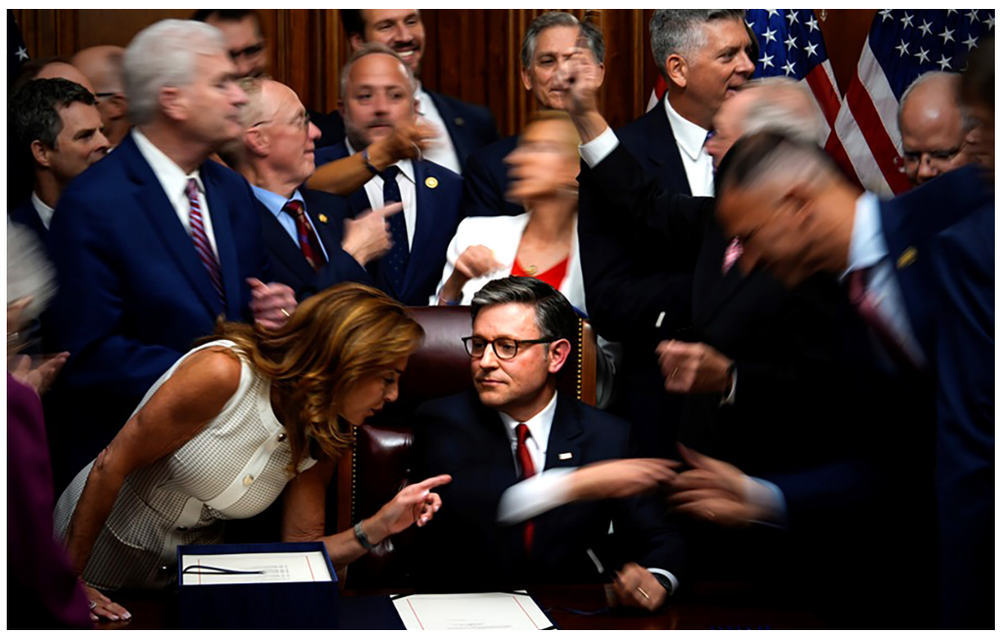
Even with early public opinion on their side, however, it's far from certain that the Republican budget bill will be the political winner Democrats hope.

The Democratic brand remains deeply unpopular, the party has no clear leader, its message is muddled and core elements of the Democratic base are frustrated and drifting. Some of the bill's changes won't take effect until after the 2026 midterms, so voters may not have felt the full impact by the time they vote.

At the same time, it's unclear how many voters are paying attention to the Washington-based debate.

The Democratic super PAC Priorities USA warned this week that Democrats must work harder if they want their message to break through the polarised media environment.

"We can't just assume that because we're angry that the voters that we need to communicate with are angry. Everyone needs to step up and realise the enormous challenge that's in front of us," Executive Director Danielle Butterfield said. "We're nowhere near a good starting place."



Republican members of Congress reach to shake hands with Speaker of the House Mike Johnson after he signed President Donald Trump's signature bill of tax breaks and spending cuts **PHOTO: PTI**

At its core, the bill's priority is USD 4.5 trillion in tax breaks enacted in Trump's first term that would expire if Congress failed to act, along with new ones. This includes allowing workers to deduct tips and overtime pay.

The package includes USD 1.2 trillion in cutbacks to Medicaid and food stamps and a massive rollback of green energy investments. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates the package will add USD 3.3 trillion to the deficit over the decade.

Democrats in Congress were united against the bill, and even some Republicans expressed concerns. But ultimately, Trump persuaded the conservative holdouts to fall in line.

Democrats' challenge on display

Privately, some Democrats conceded that Republicans were smart to pass the bill on the eve of a holiday weekend when fewer voters would be paying attention.

And as some Democrats in Washington predicted a fierce political backlash across America, the response was somewhat muted Thursday at a Democratic event in Iowa, barely 10 miles from the Iowa State Fairgrounds where Trump later drew thousands for an evening rally.

An audience of roughly 100 people listened as local Democratic officials railed against the legislation and called on voters to oust Republican Rep. Zach Nunn, the local congressman, for supporting it.

Audience member Michael Rieck, 69, said Iowa Democrats left him a message about the rally, but when he went online to learn more, "there was nothing".

"I texted back to them that I didn't see any advertisement," he said. "They slowly corrected that. I'm still not impressed with what they did to advertise this event."

Rieck said he wants to see different factions of the party better coordinate their message.

Meanwhile, progressive activists were moving through Minnesota in a big green bus as part of Fair Share America's 29-stop "stop the billionaire giveaway" tour. The group is focused on Republican-led congressional districts where elected officials have largely stopped having in-person town halls with constituents.

Fair Share Executive Director Kristen Crowell said the crowds, even some Trump supporters, have been receptive.

Still, she acknowledged many people don't know what's in the bill.

"We know we're fighting upstream," she said. "But when people hear exactly what's in this bill, they're adamantly opposed. I mean, I can tell you, in 17 stops, I've not had one person come up to me and say, You are on the wrong side of this.'"

What the polls say

The GOP's bill is generally unpopular, according to polling conducted throughout the month of June, although some individual provisions are popular.

For example, a Washington Post/Ipsos poll found that majorities of US adults support increasing the annual child tax credit and eliminating taxes on earnings from tips, and about half support work requirements for some adults who receive Medicaid.

On the other hand, the poll found that majorities oppose reducing federal funding for food assistance to low-income families and spending about USD 45 billion to build and maintain migrant detention centers.

The price tag could be a sticking point. About 6 in 10 US adults in the poll said it was "unacceptable" that the bill is expected to increase the US national debt, currently at USD 36 trillion, by about USD 3 trillion over the next decade.

But polling indicates that most Americans aren't paying attention to the nuances of the bill, either.

The Washington Post/Ipsos poll found that only about one-third of US adults have heard "a great deal" or "a good amount" about it.

Democrats are planning a summer of organising

The Democratic National Committee and its allies plan an "organising summer" that will feature town halls, training and voter registration drives in at least 35 competitive congressional districts. The message will be focused heavily on Trump's bill.

Democratic groups also are expected to unveil a new round of digital attack ads targeting vulnerable Republicans in the coming days.

Kansas Gov Laura Kelly, who leads the Democratic Governors Association, said her party must keep the bill's contents at the forefront of people's minds to ensure it's an issue in the 2026 midterm elections, and even the next presidential election in 2028.

"We'll just have to keep that on the radar," she said.

Meanwhile, progressive groups are planning a "Family First" day of action for July 26 in all 50 states. They'll highlight vulnerable Americans hurt by the new Medicaid cuts and hold a 60-hour vigil at the US Capitol.

"Because people call Medicaid something different in every state, a lot of people didn't realise — until this very moment — that their health care was at stake," said one of the Family First organizers, Ai-jen Poo, president of the National Domestic Workers Alliance.

"We have made a promise to each other and to future generations that there will be a safety net in place when we need it. And this is what's being ripped away. And people will not stand for it." —PTI

SALAR سالار

How Jane Street manipulated mkts to gain ₹36,000 crore

US-based proprietary trading firm Jane Street has been accused of executing an "egregious" market manipulation scheme in India, allegedly earning illegal profits of Rs 36,671 crore between January 2023 and March 2025. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has temporarily barred the firm from dealing in Indian securities and has ordered the transfer of Rs 4,843 crore of these "illegal gains" into an escrow account.

Jane Street, which began its India operations in December 2020, allegedly manipulated the Indian derivatives market through two key strategies, primarily targeting the Bank Nifty and Nifty index options segments. These highly liquid instruments provided a platform for the firm to benefit from calculated trades that moved index levels artificially.

Manipulative strategies

According to Sebi's investigation, Jane Street executed a strategy involving aggressive buying of select Bank Nifty index stocks and futures in the morning, followed by heavy selling in the afternoon. This activity triggered a sharp drop in share prices toward market close, creating what is known as a "softer close." Despite suffering losses in the underlying stock and futures trades, the group profited significantly from massive short positions in index options, which gained value as the market fell.

On 21 expiry days between January 2023 and May 2025, Jane Street was found to have executed large trades in the cash and futures markets to deliberately influence index movements. The second manipulative approach involved concentrated buying or selling in the final two hours of trading on expiry days, further swaying index levels and allowing the firm to maximise gains in the options market.

Sebi stated that these actions enabled the group to generate illegal profits of Rs 4,843 crore directly tied to the manipulative strategies, while their overall net profits during the investigation period reached Rs 36,671 crore.

Profit breakdown

Between January 2023 and March 2025, Jane Street's entities recorded substantial trading activity across market segments. The group earned Rs 44,358 crore from index options trading—the bulk of its profits. However, these gains were partially offset by:

- ₹7,208 crore in losses from stock futures,
- ₹191 crore in index futures losses,
- ₹288 crore in losses in the cash market.

After factoring in all profits and losses, the group reported a net total profit of Rs 36,671 crore, Sebi noted.

Entities involved

Four entities operated under the Jane Street Group in India:

1. Jane Street Singapore Pte Ltd (Registered FPI, incorporated in Singapore)
2. Jane Street Asia Trading Ltd (Registered FPI, incorporated in Hong Kong)
3. JSI Investments Pvt Ltd (Incorporated in India in December 2020, wholly owned by Jane Street Europe Ltd, UK)
4. JSI2 Investments Pvt Ltd (Incorporated in India in September 2024, wholly owned by JSI Investments)

Sebi found that two of these — Jane Street Singapore and Jane Street Asia Trading — were registered foreign portfolio investors (FPIs). The creation of Indian entities like JSI Investments allowed the Jane Street Group to bypass certain FPI regulations, particularly the restriction against FPIs engaging in intraday cash market transactions.

"It appears that the incorporation of JSI Investments Private Limited in India enabled the JS Group to work around the regulatory prohibition in FPI Regulations against FPIs undertaking intraday cash market transactions, and thereby execute the manipulative scheme without specifically flouting the FPI regulations," Sebi stated. —PTI

According to Sebi's investigation, Jane Street executed a strategy involving aggressive buying of select Bank Nifty index stocks **PHOTO: PTI**

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

New Gaza ceasefire deal on table – will this time be different?

US President Donald Trump, says that Israel has agreed to terms for a 60-day ceasefire in Gaza. If that sounds familiar, it is.

The idea of a two-month truce has been discussed since the collapse of the last shortlived ceasefire in March. A similar proposal was floated in May, but Hamas viewed it as an enabling mechanism for Israel to continue the war after a brief pause, rather than reaching a permanent peace deal.

As the devastation in Gaza worsens by the day, will this time be any different?

The proposal, put forward by Qatari mediators, reportedly involves Hamas releasing ten living hostages and the bodies of 18 deceased hostages over the 60-day period, in exchange for the release of a number of Palestinian prisoners.

The remaining 22 hostages would be released if a long-term deal is reached. The 60-day ceasefire period would also involve negotiations for a permanent end to hostilities and a roadmap for post-war governance in Gaza.

But the plan is similar to the eight-week, three-phase ceasefire from January to March of this year, which collapsed after the first phase of hostage exchanges. Since then peace talks have hit a recurrent impasse.

For Hamas, a long-term ceasefire means the permanent end to the war and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza. Israel, meanwhile, wants to see the complete removal of Hamas from power, the dismantling and disarming of its military wing and the exile of remaining senior Hamas leaders.

But despite the persistent challenges, there are several reasons that this attempt for a ceasefire might be different. First and foremost is the recent so-called "12-day war" between Israel and Iran, which Israel has trumpeted as a major success for degrading Iran's nuclear capabilities (although the reality is more nuanced).

The perceived win gives Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, political manoeuvrability to pursue a ceasefire over the objections of far-right hardliners in his coalition who have threatened to bring down the government in previous rounds.

The Iran-Israel war, in which the US controversially carried out strikes on Iran's nuclear sites, also revived Trump's interest in the Middle East. Trump entered office just as the phased Gaza ceasefire deal was being agreed. But Trump put little diplomatic pressure on Israel to engage in serious talks to get from the first phase of the agreement to phase two, allowing the war to resume in March.

Mourners pray beside the bodies of Palestinians who were killed by an Israeli airstrike that struck a school used as a shelter, in Shifa Hospital in Gaza City **PHOTO: PTI**

Now however, after assisting Israel militarily in Iran, Trump has significant leverage he can use with Netanyahu. He will have the chance to use it (if he chooses) when Netanyahu visits Washington next week.

Both men also view Iran's weakened position as an opportunity for expanding the Abraham accords. This was the set of agreements normalising relations between Israel and several Arab states, including the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco, which Trump brokered at the end of his first term.

Netanyahu has long eyed a US-backed deal with Saudi Arabia, and a smaller-scale declaration with Syria is reportedly now under discussion as well. But those deals can't move forward while the war in Gaza is going.

Additional obstacles

However, the recurrent obstacles to a deal remain – and it's unclear if the proposed terms will include guarantees to prevent Israel resuming the war after the 60-day period.

New issues have also arisen since the last round of talks that could create further challenges. Hamas is demanding a return to traditional humanitarian aid distribution in Gaza – or at least the replacement of the controversial US and Israeli-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF).

The GHF's four distribution sites, located in militarised zones, replaced over 400 previously operating aid points, and more than 400 people have been killed while seeking aid near the sites, since May 26. More than 170 international non-governmental organisations and charities have called for the GHF to be shut down.

Israel's military control over Gaza has also become further entrenched since the last ceasefire. More than 80 per cent is thought to be covered by evacuation orders – and new orders for north Gaza and Gaza City were issued on June 29 and July 2 respectively.

Israeli officials have described the renewed operations as military pressure on Hamas to accept a ceasefire. But Netanyahu has also spoken openly about long-term military occupation of Gaza.

He recently stated that Israel would remain in "full security control of Gaza" even after the war. Even if a temporary ceasefire is agreed, the road ahead is strewn with difficulties in moving towards a long-lasting ceasefire or reaching an acceptable "day-after" agreement.

Still, the current moment offers an opportunity for a breakthrough. Trump has a renewed interest in getting to a ceasefire and Netanyahu has a rare political window to enter an agreement and get hostages home.

Hamas, meanwhile, has been weakened, not only by Israel's relentless military pounding, but by increasing disillusionment from the people of Gaza, who are desperate for an end to the war. There is no shortage of reasons to end the war in Gaza. The only question is if Israel and Hamas have the will to do so. —PTI

Pak, Russia to expand road, rails to access warm waters

ISLAMABAD, 4 JULY

Pakistan and Russia have agreed to collaborate on establishing a robust rail and road network to link the South Asian country with Central Asia and Russia, providing landlocked states direct access to warm waters, a media report said on Friday.

The initiative aims to transform Pakistan into a strategic transit hub by enhancing trade corridors and logistical routes extending to Russia and Central Asia, Geo News reported.

Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan and Russian Deputy Minister of Transport Andrey Sergeyevich Nikitin, on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) minis-terial conference in Tianjin, China, agreed to accelerate infrastructure development across the re-gion to facilitate trade and economic integration.

- The initiative aims to transform Pakistan into a strategic transit hub by enhancing trade corridors and logistical routes extending to Russia and Central Asia

Highlighting Pakistan's ongoing modernisation efforts, Khan said the country was digitising its transport infrastructure, introducing barrier-free motorways, mandatory e-tagging, and compre-hensive CCTV surveillance.

He said the reforms were part of Pakistan's broader goal to optimise regional connectivity and cross-border trade.

Deputy Minister Nikitin acknowledged the potential of Pakistan-Russia cooperation in transforming regional trade dynamics and reaffirmed Moscow's commitment to pursuing joint transport and in-frastructure projects with Islamabad.

Pakistan and Afghanistan last month agreed to advance the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (UAP) rail project, a key step toward regional connectivity.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Afghanistan's Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, in a telephonic conversation, agreed to work closely for an early finalisation of the framework agreement.

The railway project to link Pakistan with Central Asia through Afghanistan is vital in improving inter-connectivity in the region. *—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Michael Madsen, 'Reservoir Dogs' star, dies at 67

LOS ANGELES, 4 JULY

Actor Michael Madsen, rec-ognised for his menacing roles in Quentin Tarantino's films such as 'Res-ervoir Dogs' and 'Kill Bill: Vol. 2', has died at the age of 67. Authorities found him unre-sponsive in his Malibu home on Thursday morning, with cardiac arrest suspected as the cause of death. Mad-sen's storied career includ-ed over 300 film credits, often portraying thugs and gangsters. His infa-mous scene in 'Reservoir Dogs,' where he tortures a police officer, was particularly piv-otal. Mad-sen, who had six children, faced personal struggles following the death of his son in 2022. He is re-membered fondly by peers, including his sister Virginia Madsen, who mourned his loss and cele-brated his complicated yet loving spirit. *—PTI*

Search intensifies for 30 missing in Bali ferry capsize

GILIMANUK, 4 JULY

A search operation has been intensified for 30 indi-viduals missing following a ferry sinking near Bali. Indonesian authorities deployed navy ships and helicopters on Friday, with 160 rescuers involved in the operation. The KMP Tunu Pratama Jaya ferry sank shortly after departing on a short journey from East Java to Gilimanuk, carrying 22 vehicles. Survivors reported that strong cur-rents and high waves con-tributed to the rapid capsiz-ing. With six bodies con-firmed and 29 survivors already identi-fied, relatives are anxiously awaiting news. Survivors described panic as vehicles toppled over, making it difficult for many to access life jackets. *—PTI*

North Korean man detained for crossing into South

SEOUL, 04 JULY

An unidentified North Korean man has crossed the heavily fortified border into South Korea and is now in custody, as confirmed by the South's Joint Chiefs of Staff. The individual was detected near the military demarcation line and taken into custody during a guid-ing operation on Thursday even-ing. Authorities are investigating the circum-stances of this border crossing but have not yet deter-mined if it was intended as a defection. Following the new conser-vative administration's attempts to rebuild trust with the North, the South has suspended its loud-speaker broadcasts at the border. The unfolding situa-tion remains a focus for South Korean officials and the United Nations Com-mand, which has been informed of the incident. *—PTI*

Air traffic strike in France leaves 40% of flights cancelled

PARIS, 4 JULY

A significant disruption in air travel has unfolded in Paris, with approximately 40 per cent of flights can-celled across all local air-ports on Friday due to a strike by French air traffic controllers advocating for improved working condi-tions. The situation began escalating on Thursday and worsened by Friday, prompting the national civil aviation authority to advise airlines to cancel 40 per cent of flights at Charles de Gaulle, Orly, and Beauvais airports. Other French cities were also affected, with Nice witnessing the cancel-lation of half of its flights, and Marseille and Lyon see-ing a 30 per cent reduction. UNSA-ICNA, one of the unions involved, cited a shortage of staff to cope with in-creasing air travel demands and inflation erod-ing wages as key reasons for the strike. *—PTI*

Trump's Big Beautiful Bill set to arrive at his desk

After House clearance, the president will sign the legislation

WASHINGTON, 4 JULY

US President Donald Trump is set to sign his "Big Beautiful Bill" at 4pm EST on 4 July, after it cleared the United States House of Representatives a day earlier. The Bill combines tax reduc-tions, spending hikes on defence and border security, and cuts to social safety nets.

The Bill has somehow edged its way to the White House, winning by the narrowest of margins when lawmakers voted. The Bill passed the House on Thursday, with no Democratic support and only two no votes from Republicans, as Trump's party banked on its majority to push the legis-lation through.

"Our Party is UNITED like never before and, our Country is HOT," Trump wrote on his Truth Social after the Bill cleared the House. He had been adamant that the Bill would be passed on 4 July, the nation's independence day. "The people of the United States of America will be Richer, Safer, and Prouder than ever before."

However, the 800-page docu-ment has been notably contro-versial because it includes massive cuts to Medicaid and USAID programmes and is set to grant the Immigrations and Customs Enforcement immense power through fund-ing. Additionally, the Bill's tax cuts are seen as being ben-eficial primarily to the wealthy of the country, leav-ing sparse perks for the lower sections of society. Democrat Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez said the Bill makes Ice bigger than the FBI and other federal agencies. *—Agencies*

President Donald Trump is set to sign the Bill by 4 pm on 4 July, on the 250th birthday of the US **PHOTO: PTI**

Trump wants to mark 4 July with UFC match

Trump said on Thursday that he's thinking of staging a UFC match on the White House grounds on 4 July with upwards 20,000 spec-tators to celebrate 250 years of American independence. "We have a lot of land there," said Trump, a UFC enthusiast and close friends with Dana White, the league's president

Trump hikes national park fees for foreigners

Trump on Thursday said national parks would hike entry fees for foreign tourists to "improve affordability" for Americans, as he launched the country's year-long 250th birthday celebrations. "I've just signed an executive order to raise entrance fees for foreign tourists while keeping prices low for Americans," Trump said.

El Salvador Prez denies torturing Abrego Garcia

El Salvador President Nayib Bukele cast aside allegations that Kilmar Abrego Garcia was beaten and subject to psychological torture in a Salvadoran prison on Thursday. It comes after Abrego Garcia said he suf-fered severe beatings, severe sleep deprivation and psy-chological torture in the notorious El Salvador prison.

SC allows deportation of random immigrants to South Sudan

The Supreme Court on Thursday cleared the way for the deportation of several immigrants who were put on a flight in May bound for South Sudan, a war-ravaged country where they have no ties. The decision comes after the justices found that immigration officials can quickly deport peo-ple to third countries. This comes as the administration deported famed Mexican boxer Julio César Chávez Jr for entering US illegally to Mexico, where he faces organised crime charges.

Hamas will respond to ceasefire deal in 24 hrs, says Trump

WASHINGTON/DEIR AL-BALAH/JERUSALEM, 4 JULY

US President Donald Trump reportedly said on Friday that Hamas would respond to his Israel-Gaza ceasefire proposal within the next 24 hours.

Asked if Hamas had agreed to the latest ceasefire deal framework, he said: "We'll see what hap-pens, we are going to know over the next 24 hours."

Trump termed the deal the "final proposal" for the ongo-ing humanitarian crisis in Gaza. He had, on Tuesday, said that Israel accepted the conditions for a 60-day cease-fire deal. Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is expected to visit the US on Monday.

Hamas has continuously said that they are open to a ceasefire provided it brought an end to the ongoing war. After Trump's Tuesday announcement, the reiterated the stance as they sent dele-ga-tions to Egypt and Qatar to chalk out the details for the plan.

ISRAEL KILLS AT LEAST 35 IN GAZA

Meanwhile, Israeli airstrikes killed 15 Palestinians in Gaza early on Friday, while another 20 people were shot dead while waiting for aid, the hospital morgue that received their bodies said.

At least eight women and one child were killed in the air strikes.

Meanwhile, the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, the Israeli-backed American organisation running the new aid programme in Gaza, denied a report by The Associated Press that American contrac-tors guard-ing the foundation's aid sites were using live ammunition and stun grenades on starving Palestinians. *—PTI*

613 killed in Gaza near aid sites since late May: UN

Clouds of smoke cover the area of Thursday's Israeli bombardment on Gaza Strip – a view from southern Israel **PHOTO: PTI**

Russia launches its largest aerial assault on Kyiv

KYIV, 4 JULY

Kyiv experienced its largest aerial assault since the onset of Russia's invasion over three years ago, with waves of drone and missile strikes causing significant damage and injuring at least 23 people. The seven-hour attack lit up the night sky with explosions, prompting air raid sirens to wail across the city. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy described it as a "harsh, sleep-less night."

The barrage involved approximately 550 drones and missiles, overwhelmingly con-sisting of Shahed drones. A wedding photographer, Alya Shahlai, witnessed the destruction of her home as she sought shelter in a basement just before the blasts.

Smoke rises after a Russian strike on Kyiv, Ukraine, on Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

This escalation follows a recent pattern of intensified long-range attacks by Russia and coincided with a phone call between US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin, where Trump remarked on the lack of progress in peace negotiations.

Meanwhile, the Pentagon has paused shipments of criti-cal military aid, including air defence missiles, prompting Ukraine's European allies to explore alternative support strategies. Ukrainian air defences managed to intercept 270 targets during the assault, but debris and missile strikes caused extensive damage across Kyiv and several other regions. Emergency services reported significant destruc-tion in multiple districts of the capital, underscoring the vola-tility of the conflict. *—PTI*

IRAN OPENS AIRPORTS TO FOREIGN FLIGHTS AFTER 20-DAY SUSPENSION

TEHRAN, 4 JULY

Iran's Imam Khomeini International Airport has wel-comed its first foreign flight since the resump-tion of international air travel after a 20-day suspen-sion, local media reported on Friday.

According to Student News Network, Mehdi Ramezani, spokesperson for Iran's Civil Aviation Or-ganisation, confirmed the Flydubai flight from the United Arab Emirates landed on Wednesday, after extensive security and diplomatic coor-dination.

The landing marks a "new phase of stability" for Iran's aviation sector, Ramezani said, after recent tensions with Israel. He added that it represented a return to calm and intelligent manage-ment of the nation's airspace.

International flights will gradually resume to specific destinations in coordination with authorities, to meet pub-lic needs and restore air links, he said. *—PTI*

Russia becomes first country to formally recognise Taliban govt

MOSCOW, 4 JULY

Russia on Thursday became the first country to formally recognise the Taliban's gov-ernment in Afghanistan since it seized power in 2021, after Moscow removed the group from its list of outlawed organ-isations.

The Russian Foreign Ministry announced that it had received credentials from Afghanistan's newly appoint-ed Ambassador Gul Hassan Hassan. The official recogni-tion of the Afghan government will foster "productive bilater-al cooperation," the ministry said in a statement.

Afghanistan's Foreign Ministry called it a historic step, and quoted Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi as welcoming the decision as "a good example for other countries."

Russia's ambassador to Afghanistan, Dmitry Zhirnov, said that Russia was "sincere-ly striving for the develop-ment of full-fledged relations with Afghanistan".

The Taliban took control of Afghanistan in August 2021 following the withdrawal of US and NATO forces. Since then, they have sought inter-national recognition while also enforcing their strict in-terpretation of Islamic law.

Russia said it received credentials from Afghanistan's newly appointed Ambassador Gul Hassan Hassan **PHOTO: X**

While no country had for-mally recognised the Taliban administration until now, the group had engaged in high-lev-el talks with many nations and established some diplo-matic ties with countries including China and the United Arab Emirates. *—PTI*

Pak Forces kill 30 terrorists from Afghanistan

PESHAWAR, 4 JULY

At least 30 militants were neu-tralised while attempting to infiltrate into northwest Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, according to Islamabad's military media wing on Friday.

The military successfully foiled the infiltration attempts from across the Afghan border in the Has-san Khel region of North Waziristan district during operations conducted on Tuesday and Wednes-day nights, reported the ISPR.

In a precise operation, secu-rity forces engaged a signifi-cant group of terrorists, lead-ing to the elimination of 30 individuals trying to cross into Pakistan. A substantial cache of weapons, ammuni-tion, and explosives was also seized from their possession.

The ISPR stressed the opera-tion as evidence of the vigilance of Pakistan's intelli-gence networks and the professionalism of its armed forces, officials said. *—PTI*

ISSUED DEATH THREATS

Indian-origin man 'laughs darkly' and then assaults flight passenger

PHILADELPHIA, 4 JULY

Indian-origin Ishaan Sharma, 21, from Newark has been arrested following an unpro-voked attack on a fellow pas-senger during a Frontier Airlines flight from Philadelphia to Miami on 30 June. The incident, which has garnered widespread atten-tion, was captured on video and shows Sharma and anoth-er passenger, Keanu Evans, engaged in a physical confron-tation as alarmed travellers attempted to intervene.

According to Evans, the altercation began when Sharma allegedly approached him and tightened his grip around his neck while return-ing to his seat. Evans described Sharma's behaviour as bizarre, noting that he had been emitting a "dark laugh" and issuing death threats.

"He was saying things like, 'You puny, mortal man, if you challenge me, it will result in your death,'" Evans recount-ed. Disturbed by Sharma's erratic actions, Evans pressed the cabin crew assistance but-ton, which provoked Sharma further.

A video recording shows Ishaan Sharma and another passenger, Keanu Evans, engaged in a physical confrontation **PHOTO: X**

Shortly after the fight broke out, as the plane was prepar-ing to land, Sharma was taken to Jackson West Hospital for treatment of a black eye and a laceration on his eyebrow before being arrested. During a court appearance, defence attorney Renee Gordon claimed that Sharma's actions stemmed from a meditation practice associated with his religious beliefs, which she stated the pas-senger behind him found disruptive.

However, Miami-Dade Circuit Judge Gerald Hubbart was not swayed by this explanation, setting Sharma's bond at $500 and issuing a stay-away order, for-bidding him from contacting Evans or approaching his educational institution or workplace. *—Agencies*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Gold declines by ₹600 to ₹99,020 per 10g

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

Gold prices declined Rs 600 to Rs 99,020 per 10g in the national capital on Friday due to fresh selling by stockists, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Gold of 99.9 per cent purity had settled at Rs 99,620 per 10g on Thursday. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity slipped Rs 500 to Rs 98,500 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes). It had closed at Rs 99,000 per 10g in the previous market close.Silver prices also plunged Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,04,800 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) on Friday. It had finished at Rs 1,05,800 per kg in the previous market close. Spot gold in the international markets went up marginally to USD 3,334.45 per ounce. *—PTI*

Rupee rises by 16P, closes at 85.39 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 4 JULY

The rupee appreciated 16 paisa to close at 85.39 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, tracking a decline in the American currency in the overseas market and a weak tone in crude oil prices. The Forex traders said Asian currencies, including the rupee, gained ground on renewed hopes of trade deals with the US. US President Donald Trump announced a trade agreement with Vietnam, injecting a dose of optimism that perhaps more such agreements could be in the pipeline before the crucial 9 July deadline, according to the traders. At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 85.44 against the American currency and touched an intra-day high of 85.30 and a low of 85.50 during the session. The local unit finally settled at 85.39 (provisional), 16 paisa higher than its previous closing price.*—PTI*

NCH helps consumers get ₹7.14 cr refund

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

National Consumer Helpline (NCH) has helped consumers in getting a refund of Rs 7.14 crore in the last two months from retailers, according to an official statement issued on Friday by the Department of Consumer Affairs. 15,426 consumer grievances related to refund claims across 30 sectors were addressed by the helpline.The NCH plays a crucial pre-litigation role in resolving consumer grievances, which reduce the burden on consumer commissions under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, said the statement. Elaborating further, the department noted that the e-commerce sector contributed a maximum of 8,919 grievances. Hence, the refund was also the highest in this sector at Rs 3.69 crore. *—PTI*

OYO's DanCenter to add 250 vacation homes in India

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

Travel tech unicorn OYO on Friday said its European holiday home brand DanCenter plans to add 250 vacation homes in India in the current financial year amid rising demand for premium, well-managed vacation homes across the country. DanCenter added 50 vacation homes in the first quarter of this financial year and now has a network of vacation homes in several cities including Chennai, Lonavala, Mahabalipuram, Idukki, Jaipur and Bengaluru. Dancenter, a legacy Danish brand founded in Denmark in 1957, was acquired by OYO Vacation Homes in 2019. Since then, the company has expanded its presence in Europe significantly. Dancenter was launched in India in Goa in February 2025 with premium villas and apartments. *—PTI*

Jane Street gained ₹4.8K cr via market manipulation

The company tampered index movements on expiry days

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

In one of the most significant cases of market manipulation in recent years, US-based trading firm Jane Street Group (JS Group) defrauded Indian markets by executing a systematic scheme to manipulate index movements on expiry days, netting unlawful gains of Rs 4,843.57 crore, according to a detailed probe by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi).

The regulator revealed that on 21 expiry days between January 2023 and May 2025, the group executed large trades in the cash and futures segments to influence index movements and profit from massive positions in index options. Sebi identified two key strategies: aggressive buying of Bank Nifty stocks and futures in the morning followed by sharp selling in the afternoon to engineer a "softer close"; and concentrated buying or selling during the final two hours on expiry days to sway index levels.

While these manipulative trades led to losses in the cash and futures markets—Rs 7,208 crore in stock futures, Rs 191 crore in index futures, and Rs 288 crore in cash—they were vastly outweighed by gains of Rs 44,358 crore from index options, resulting in a net profit of Rs 36,671 crore during the period.

The market regulator revealed that on 21 expiry days between January 2023 and May 2025 the group executed large trades in the cash and futures segments to influence index movements *PHOTO: X/SALAR*

- Sebi identified two key strategies: aggressive buying of Bank Nifty stocks and futures in the morning followed by sharp selling in the afternoon to engineer a "softer close"; and concentrated buying or selling during the final two hours on expiry days to sway index levels

The case originated from media reports in April 2024 flagging possible unauthorised proprietary strategies by Jane Street. Despite receiving a warning from the NSE in February 2025 and promising to cease such activities, the group allegedly continued its manipulative trading near market close.

Sebi said the JS Group acted in "clear disregard" of regulatory advice and does not operate as a "good faith actor." Consequently, the group and related entities have been barred from accessing Indian securities markets and from dealing in securities, directly or indirectly. Their bank accounts have also been frozen for debits, except to comply with Sebi's order. *—PTI*

LILAVATI TRUST ROW

SC refuses HDFC Bank CEO's plea challenging FIR

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain a plea by HDFC Bank CEO and MD Sashidhar Jagdishan challenging an FIR of cheating and fraud registered against him on a complaint by the Lilavati Kirtilal Mehta Medical Trust, which runs the prominent Lilavati Hospital in Mumbai.

A bench of Justices P Narasimha and R Mahadevan noted that the matter was already listed for hearing on 14 July before the Bombay High Court. "We are not inclined to entertain the matter. We will not apply our mind to the merits. If matter is not heard on the 14th, you come back. We hope and trust that the high court will take the matter up on the designated date," the bench said.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Jagdishan, submitted that the bank has been roped in a private dispute.

"The idea is to summon the MD to police station. No proceedings should be taken against the MD," he said.

Rohatgi said they had moved the Bombay High Court but three benches of the high court have so far recused themselves from hearing the matter.

According to the complaint filed by the Trust, Jagdishan allegedly accepted a bribe of Rs 2.05 crore in exchange for providing financial advice to help the Chetan Mehta Group retain illegal and undue control over the Trust's governance.

The Trust has also accused Jagdishan of misusing his position as the head of a leading private bank to interfere in the internal affairs of a charitable organisation. *—PTI*

Sensex, Nifty end higher in highly volatile trade

MUMBAI, 4 JULY

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended higher on Friday in a highly volatile trade amid buying in bank stocks and a rally in the US markets.

After oscillating between highs and lows in intra-day trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 193.42 points or 0.23 per cent higher at 83,432.89. During the day, it hit a high of 83,477.86 and a low of 83,015.83, gyrating 462.03 points.

The 50-share NSE Nifty inched higher by 55.70 points or 0.22 per cent to 25,461.

From the Sensex firms, Bajaj Finance, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever, ICICI Bank, HCL Tech, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finserv, State Bank of India, Tata Consultancy Services, Reliance Industries, Axis Bank and Larsen & Toubro were among the major gainers.

However, Trent, Tata Steel, Tech Mahindra and Maruti were among the laggards.

In Asian markets, Japan's Nikkei 225 index and Shanghai's SSE Composite index settled higher while South Korea's Kospi and Hong Kong's Hang Seng ended lower.

European markets were trading in the negative territory.

The US markets ended in the positive territory on Thursday.

"The Indian market is experiencing a pause as investors adopt a wait-and-watch strategy ahead of the impending US tariff deadline with mixed global cues. Ongoing FII outflows reflect a risk-off approach, while DII inflows are offering partial support.

"Following the recent rally, main indices are hovering near peak valuation levels, limiting further upside, which is highly dependent on Q1 earnings and details of the trade deal," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude dropped 1.03 per cent to USD 68.03 a barrel. *—PTI*

CCI probe: Asian Paints to take legal recourse

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

Asian Paints said it is reviewing the order passed by fair trade regulator CCI against the paint maker, directing a probe for alleged abuse of its dominant position in the market and said that the company plans to take appropriate legal recourse.

Asian Paints, on Thursday, also expressed its will to cooperate with the CCI's investigation into allegations of exclusionary practices.

Earlier this week, CCI ordered an investigation against Asian Paints for allegedly abusing its dominant position in the market for manufacturing and sales of decorative paint over the complaints filed by Aditya Birla group firm Grasim Industries.

Grasim, a new entrant in the domestic paint industry with brand Birla Opus, had accused Asian Paints of engaging in exclusionary practices aimed at stifling its entry and growth in the Indian decorative paint segment.

Section 4 of the Competition Act, 2002, prohibits abuse of dominant position. CCI has directed its probe unit Director General for an investigation into the allegations and submit a preliminary report within a period of 90 days.

CCI had observed that Asian Paints restrained its dealers from dealing with Grasim's Birla Opus by enforcing exclusivity upon them, – thereby imposing unfair conditions upon them.

The order also clarified that observations made were not a final view on the case's merits and directed the DG to conduct the probe without being swayed in any manner by the observations. *— PTI*

Anti-dumping probe into import of polyethylene

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

The commerce ministry's arm, Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) has initiated an anti-dumping probe into the import of polyethylene from Kuwait, Malaysia, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE following a complaint by Chemicals and Petrochemicals Association of India.

The applicant has alleged that the industry is impacted due to the dumped imports of Linear-Density Polyethylene (LLDPE).

It is primarily used in raw materials in the plastic processing industry to make a variety of products such as packaging films, profiles, wire and cable.

According to the DGTR's notification, the applicant has provided evidence of how dumping imports hurts the domestic industry and if material injury to them is established, DGTR would recommend imposing levy on imports.

However, the finance ministry takes the final decision to impose duties. *—PTI*

SAIL opens Dubai office to boost global reach

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

State-owned steel maker SAIL has set up an office in Dubai with an objective to tap opportunities in the emerging markets, an official statement said on Friday. The company is the third public sector unit under the Ministry of Steel to have opened its overseas office in Dubai.

SAIL has inaugurated its Representative Office in Dubai. It is SAIL's first international office in the Middle East and marks a significant step in its global expansion strategy, the ministry said.

Union Minister of Steel and Heavy Industries HD Kumaraswamy inaugurated SAIL's new Representative Office in Dubai on Thursday *PHOTO: PIB*

The office was inaugurated by Union Minister of Steel and Heavy Industries HD Kumaraswamy on Thursday in the presence of the Consul General of India to Dubai Satish Kumar Sivan, SAIL CMD Amarendu Prakash and other senior ministry officials.

Positioned as a strategic hub, the Dubai office will help SAIL boost steel exports, deepen industry linkages and reinforce India-UAE trade ties, the ministry said.

Dubai's role as a gateway to the Middle East and North Africa region and its investor-friendly environment make it an ideal base for expanding into emerging markets. It reflects India's growing profile in the international steel arena, it said. *—PTI*

RBI announces ₹32K cr underwriting auction

MUMBAI, 4 JULY

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced an Additional Competitive Underwriting (ACU) auction for the sale of government securities worth Rs 32,000 crore on Friday. It will cover both issue of new government security and the re-issue of an existing one.

"The underwriting auction will be conducted through multiple price-based method on 4 July, 2025 (Friday). The PDs (Primary Dealers) may submit their bids for ACU auction electronically through Core Banking Solution (E-Kuber) System," the RBI said.

The securities include a new Government Security maturing in 2040 and a re-issue of the 6.90 per cent GS maturing in 2065, each carrying a notified amount of Rs 16,000 crore. *—ANI*

NEXT-GEN DEFENCE SYSTEM

Army to embark on modernisation for future warfare

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

The Indian Army is embarking on a comprehensive modernisation drive to transform its capabilities across multiple domains, from hypersonic weapons to soldier systems, as it prepares for future warfare challenges, a senior military official announced at a defence industry conference.

Lt Gen Amardeep Singh Aujla, Master General Sustenance of the Indian Army, outlined the service's ambitious vision during the New Age Military Technologies Industry Capabilities & Way Forward event, organised by FICCI, calling for unprecedented collaboration between the military, industry, and policymakers.

The Army's first priority involves developing "ultra-fast and highly manoeuvrable weapon systems", including hypersonic glide vehicles, hypersonic air-breathing engines (HEBs), and advanced fourth, fifth, and sixth-generation missiles to alter the deterrence equation.

Lt Gen Amardeep Singh Aujla *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

According to Aujla, the modernisation plan focuses on loitering ammunition and precision-guided munitions that will reduce collateral damage while enhancing the Army's surgical strike capabilities.

The service is also investing heavily in directed energy weapons, including high-energy lasers and microwave systems for drone defence, anti-missile systems, and anti-satellite capabilities, he added.

The military is seeking next-generation cyber defence tools, autonomous electronic warfare solutions, and resilient satellite systems to maintain absolute control over space assets from external and internal threats. *—ANI*

AVPL INT'L TO INVEST $1M R&D FOR DEFENCE DRONES

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

Drone making and training firm AVPL International on Friday announced an investment of USD 1 million towards research and development of defense drones. In April 2025, the company committed USD 12 million for the purpose.

"The investment focuses on addressing critical gaps in India's drone ecosystem, such as reducing dependence on imported components, developing intelligent drones with advanced swarm autonomy and creating indigenous counter-UAS capabilities," a statement said. *—PTI*

Jindal bags 50-year mining lease in Odisha

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

Jindal Steel on Friday said it has bagged a 50-year mining lease for the Roida-I iron ore and Manganese block located in Keonjhar district of Odisha. The company has secured a letter of intent (LoI) from the Odisha government for the grant of the said mining lease, it said in a statement.

Spread across 104.84 hectares, this mineral resource significantly enhances Jindal Steel's raw material security and underscores the company's commitment to integrated and sustainable steel production in India's mineral-rich eastern corridor, it added.

"This mining lease is a critical enabler for our long-term vision of self-reliant steel production," said Jindal Steel Executive Director Pankaj Malhan. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X/@FORMULA 1

F1 team Alpine appoints Steve Nielsen as MD

ENSTONE, 4 JULY

Formula 1 team Alpine has appointed Steve Nielsen as managing director to oversee its daily operations. The team said in a statement Friday that Nielsen will start in his role in September ahead of the Italian Grand Prix in Monza. He will be reporting to the team's executive advisor Flavio Briatore. The pair have been enjoying a strong relationship for years. Nielsen's appointment came in the wake of Oli Oakes' departure from the Team Principal role in May, a move that had left Briatore covering Oakes' duties. "The appointment marks a return to the team for Nielsen, who is one of the most long-standing and well-respected figures in the sport and has previously spent multiple stints at Enstone for Benetton and Renault, most notably as Sporting Director during the 2005 and 2006 championship winning years," Alpine said. Nielsen has also worked with other teams and held roles at the FIA and Formula One. Alpine is 10th in the constructors' standings. —*PTI*

AIFF begins process to find a new head coach

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) on Friday began the process to find a new head coach for its under-fire men's national team, setting 13 July as the last date for interested applicants, who must have at least 10 years of experience and "cultural sensitivity" among other qualifications. The process has been necessitated by the departure of Spaniard Manolo Marquez from the position. The 56-year-old parted ways on mutually agreeable terms with the AIFF after a string of poor results by the team. —*PTI*

24 teams to participate in Durand Cup football

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

A total of 24 teams will vie for the top honours in the 134th edition of the Durand Cup, Asia's oldest football tournament, to be played across five states from 23 July till 23 August. he 24 teams will be divided into six groups, and the world's third-oldest tournament will be played in West Bengal, Jharkhand, Manipur, Meghalaya and Assam. President Droupadi Murmu unveiled the trophies of the tournament, organised by the Indian Army, at a function at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here on Friday.—*PTI*

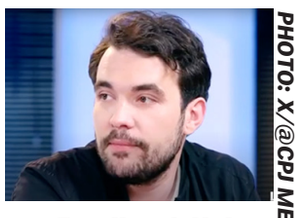


PHOTO: X/@CPJ MENA

Family of Gleizes sentenced in Algeria pleads for help

PARIS, 4 JULY

The family of a French sports journalist who has been sentenced to seven years in prison in Algeria is calling for help from the sporting world and soccer great Zinedine Zidane. Christophe Gleizes, a 36-year-old freelance sportswriter, was sentenced last week over an interview with a soccer official accused of ties to a banned separatist movement, in a case rights groups say criminalizes routine reporting. Gleizes was arrested and placed under judicial supervision more than a year ago for entering Algeria without a proper visa, "glorifying terrorism", and "possessing propaganda publications harmful to the national interest".—*PTI*

Brook scores his ninth Test hundred, Smith crosses 150

Gill & Pant can take India forward like Virat, says Vaughan

BIRMINGHAM, 4 JULY

ANDERSON TENDULKAR TROPHY

Harry Brook and Jamie Smith have brought England back on their feet with a mammoth sixth-wicket partnership *PHOTO: PTI*

Harry Brook enhanced his lofty credentials with a ninth hundred in 27 Tests as he and Jamie Smith took England to 355 for five in a wicket-less afternoon session on day three of the second Test against India here Friday.

After leaking 172 runs in the morning session, the Indian bowlers were able to bring down the run rate, but did not create enough chances to break a marathon stand between Brook and Smith.

The unbroken sixth wicket partnership stood at 271 off 323 balls as England collected 106 runs in 28 overs.

The short ball plan failed in the morning; therefore, the Indian pacers changed the tactic to bowling a wide line, especially to Brook. The plan was not persisted for long enough.

The only chance for India in the post-lunch session came when Rishabh Pant dropped a tough chance off Smith diving to his right off Nitish Reddy.

In the morning session, India skipper Shubhman Gill had dropped Brook, though it was a tough chance. Brook had slashed hard at Ravindra Jadeja, and the edge flew towards the first slip, where Gill could not react in time, taking the blow on his head.

It would take the combined might of new Test captain Shubman Gill, Yashasvi Jaiswal, and Rishabh Pant to take the Indian Test team forward in the absence of Virat Kohli, who did the job "single-handedly" in his prime, feels former England captain **Michael Vaughan**.

The Indian batting line-up appears to have progressed smoothly from Kohli and Rohit Sharma, as evidenced by their performances so far in the Test series against England. However, Vaughan, in an interview with PTI, noted that a good start does not necessarily mean the task has been accomplished.

"They (Gill, Jaiswal, and Pant) now have to drag this Indian Test team forward like Virat did single-handedly. —*PTI*

AUSTRALIA TOUR OF WEST INDIES

Alex Carey and Beau Webster

Webster, Carey rescue Australia after top order collapse

ST GEORGE'S, 4 JULY

Reckon you've seen this before? You wouldn't be wrong. Australia's top order again failed to inspire on the opening day in Grenada before Beau Webster and Alex Carey performed a familiar rescue act amid another crucial call by the third umpire and further fielding woes for West Indies.

Australia was wobbling at 110 for 5 when Travis Head fell, the TV umpire ruling Shai Hope's brilliant take clean, having earlier been 50 for 3 as a solid base vanished. Webster and Carey then added 112 in 25 overs and the game was threatening to run away from West Indies but they were able to chip away at the lower order and bowl Australia out for 286 inside 67 overs, with Alzarri Joseph claiming four wickets. To the home side's benefit, light prevented Australia from having a brief bowl with the umpires taking the players off just as they returned to the field.

Although not on the level of Barbados, there was assistance for the quicks Roston Chase said he would have bowled had the toss gone his way and suggestions that uneven bounce could play a part later in the game Stumps Australia 286 (Carey 63, Webster 60, Joseph 4-61, Seales 2-45) vs West Indies. —*PTI*

Andrey Rublev reaches 4th round of Wimbledon

LONDON, 4 JULY

Russian tennis player Andrey Rublev beat French athlete Adrian Mannarino in the third round of the Wimbledon tournament in London on Friday.

The meeting ended with the result 7:5, 6:2, 6:3. It was in favor of Rublev, who was seeded at number 14, and lasted 1 hour and 59 minutes.

The 27-year-old Russian scored 13 aces, 4 double faults, and 5 break points out of 8, according to Sport-Express.

In the next round of Wimbledon, Rublev will play the winner of the match between German tennis player Jan-Lennard Struff and Spanish athlete Carlos Alcaraz. The day before, Russian tennis player Mirra Andreeva made it to the third round of the Wimbledon tournament, beating Italian Lucia Bronzetti. The meeting lasted 1 hour and 33 minutes and ended with a score of 6:1, 7:6 (7:4).

Anastasia *PHOTO: X/WIMBLEDON*

Anisimova *PHOTO: X/WIMBLEDON*

Naomi Osaka loses to Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova in the 3rd round

Naomi Osaka might be more comfortable on grass courts these days but she will once again leave in the third round after a 3-6, 6-4, 6-4 loss to Anastasia Pavlyu chenkova on Friday. Osaka is a former No. 1 now ranked 50th and a four-time Grand Slam champion, all on hard courts — she won the U.S. Open and Australian Open twice apiece. Osaka arrived at the All England Club this year having lost three of her last four matches at the place and with a career record of 5-4 there.

Her best showing was getting to the third round in 2017 and 2018; she missed the tournament in 2021, 2022 and 2023. From 4-all in the third set, Pavluchenkova grabbed eight of the match's last 10 points, holding at love, then breaking in the final game with the help of a trio of forehand unforced errors by Osaka.

Anisimova reaches last 16

American Amanda Anisimova became the first American through to the last 16 of this year's Wimbledon with a 6-3, 5-7, 6-3 win over Hungary's Dalma Galfi on Friday.

Not that the 13th seed was too impressed by her Independence Day display on a sunny Court Three.

"It was an incredibly tough match, but I kept fighting," the 23-year-old, one of five American women to reach the third round, said on court.

"I think the quality wasn't that great today, but I will hit the practice courts tomorrow."Anisimova, a quarterfinalist in 2022, secured the decisive break of serve in the first set with a stunning lob to lead 5-3. —*PTI*

Andrey Rublev

NICO AGREES TO STAY AT ATHLETIC BILBAO

BARCELONA, 4 JULY

Spain winger Nico Williams has agreed to a long-term deal that will keep him at Athletic Bilbao through 2035, the Spanish club said Friday.

The 22-year-old Williams has been one of the top rising talents since he excelled in helping Spain win the 2024 European Championship last summer. Barcelona was reportedly keen on trying to sign him. Instead, Athletic said Williams will sign a new deal that gives him an eight-year extension. His current contract was through 2027.

Athletic will play in the Champions League next season after finishing La Liga in fourth place. —*PTI*

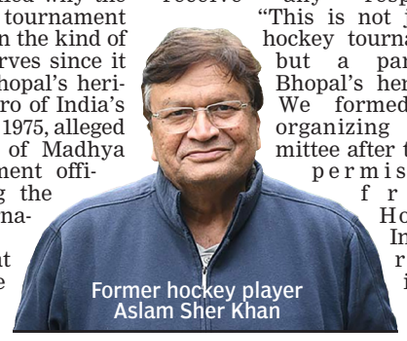
BHOPAL'S HERITAGE

Sher Khan unhappy as revival of Obaidullah Cup hits roadblock

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

Former hockey player Aslam Sher Khan is baffled why the Obaidullah Cup tournament has not been given the kind of treatment it deserves since it was a "part of Bhopal's heritage." Khan, a hero of India's World Cup win in 1975, alleged that the apathy of Madhya Pradesh government officials is affecting the revival of the tournament.

He informed that a committee formed under his chairmanship of Aslam sent e-mails to the state sports director and Bhopal's commissioner but did not receive any response.



Former hockey player Aslam Sher Khan

"This is not just a hockey tournament but a part of Bhopal's heritage. We formed the organizing committee after taking permission from Hockey India to revive it this year, and it was to be held in May, but despite repeated contacts, there was no response from the state government," Khan told PTI Bhasha. He said that the tournament was earlier scheduled to be held on 14 April, but due to the repair of the Aishbagh stadium, it was decided to hold it on 22 April. "We had invited 12 teams who had confirmed their participation, including Army XI, Railway Sports Promotion Board, Indian Air Force, Indian Navy, Hockey Maharashtra, Hockey Uttar Pradesh, and Hockey Jharkhand." —*PTI*

India's tour of B'desh set to be postponed

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

India's upcoming white-ball tour of Bangladesh is likely to be postponed as the BCCI is "wary" of the security situation in the country, which is in turmoil since last year's civil unrest that resulted in the overthrow of the Sheikh Hasina-led government.

India was to play three T20 Internationals and three ODIs during the tour from August 17 to 31 in Chittagong and Dhaka.

"BCCI is wary about the security situation in Bangladesh post the civil unrest," a BCCI source told PTI. However, the series is not canceled but will be held at a later date, "preferably 2026," as ODI Championship points for World Cup qualification are linked to it.

It is understood that BCCI wants the tour to go ahead only after the general elections are held in Bangladesh and "a stable government is in place taking care of the law and order situation. —*PTI*

I'm not enjoying playing chess: Carlsen

ZAGREB, 4 JULY

World number one Magnus Carlsen says he is struggling to enjoy chess after suffering a second consecutive defeat to reigning world champion D Gukesh, who the Norwegian has described as a "weak" player multiple times.

The 19-year-old Indian Grandmaster once again outplayed the former world champion maverick, this time in the rapid format at the SuperUnited Rapid & Blitz tournament on Thursday.

The win comes less than a month after Gukesh stunned Carlsen in the classical format at the Norway Chess tournament, a match that ended with the latter visibly frustrated, famously banging the table.

Magnus Carlsen

"Honestly, I am not enjoying playing chess at all right now. I just don't feel any flow at all when I'm playing. I'm constantly hesitating and it's just really poor right now," Carlsen told 'Take Take Take' after the loss.

The win against Carlsen marked Gukesh's fifth consecutive triumph in the tournament as he grabbed the sole lead after six rounds.

"He's doing incredibly well now (in the format). It's a long way to go in the tournament but winning five games in a row is no mean feat," said Carlsen.

Carlsen has rarely missed an opportunity to voice his doubts over Gukesh's prowess in the faster formats.

But he now has struggles of his own to worry about as he has managed just one win so far in the ongoing tournament. —*PTI*

Indian golfers face early exit from Irish Open

KILDARE, 4 JULY

Things were looking bleak for the Indian women golfers at the KPMG Irish Open three out of four in contention were staring at an early exit at Carton House on the Ladies European Tour. Led by Tvesa Malik, who had the best card among the four Indians on the first day with an opening score of 1-over 74, none were inside the projected cut line of even par.

Tvesa was tied 72 out of a field of 131 players, while Diksha Dagar and Avani Prashanth, with rounds of 75 each, were T-91, and Hitaashee Bakshi with 77 was T-133.

This month is stacked full of high-profile Ladies European Tour events, and all the Indians will need low scores on the second day if they hope to cut. The leaders at the end of the first round were Chiara of Switzerland and Fernandez of Spain.—*PTI*

NEERAJ CHOPRA CLASSIC

This is the beginning of a new chapter: Neeraj

BENGALURU, 4 JULY

Double Olympic medallist Neeraj Chopra is living a dream of competing in a javelin event that bears his name and believes that it is the start of something significant in Indian athletics, which now needs multiple world-class events.

The Neeraj Chopra Classic, which will feature top-class athletes, is set to take place at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium here on Saturday.

Chopra said he will try to upscale the event in the coming years. "I feel like I'm in a dream. Medals are a different thing. But I've given something like this to India and Indian athletes. I'm very happy about that. This is the beginning of a new chapter in our athletics," Chopra said in a pre-event press meet here Friday.

Neeraj Chopra (third from Left), along with Julius Yego (Left), Thomas Rohler (second from Left), and Sachin Yadav extreme right during the press conference of the Neeraj Chopra Classic 2025 in Bengaluru on Friday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

"The support I'm getting from everyone. From the government, from KOA (Karnataka Olympic Association), from World Athletics, from the sponsors... I feel like we can make this event even better." Chopra said he wanted to make the athletic competitions in India comparable to the events that are held regularly in traditional powerhouses like the USA or European nations. "This is the beginning of international competitions in India. As we see, there are so many international competitions in Germany and such nations - A, B, C, etc, and every week, there's a competition. —*PTI*

World champions begin Euro 2025 campaign in style

LONDON, 4 JULY

First was 32-year-old Esther Gonzalez, now the oldest Spain player to make a Women's EURO final appearance, cleverly controlling and finishing Olga Carmona's long ball with just one minute and 27 seconds played.

Then, as Montserrat Tomé's side continued to press, it was 18-year-old Vicky López sliding in to convert Mariona Caldentey's excellent low cross and double the lead.

Mariona played creator once more as Spain added a third in the 41st minute, brilliantly picking out the run of Alexia Putellas, who finished coolly after excellently controlling on her chest and weaving past a Portugal defender.

Esther González then poked in the fourth two minutes later, the No. 9 positioned for an easy finish after Clàudia Pina's cross-shot rebounded from the post.

It did not look like Spain would add to that tally for most of a controlled second half, but substitute Cristina Martin-Prieto made it 5-0 with a powerful header in added time. —*PTI*